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ABSTRACT

Since the California Assessment Program began in 1972 to provide information for evaluation of school programs in California, major changes in testing practices have occurred. Scholastic aptitude testing has been eliminated in all grades; state-designed reading and basic skills tests are administered in grades one, two, three, six, and twelve. This handbook was created to provide district test coordinatchs with information and assistance in dealing with the public and the press. A chapter on interpreting test results includes information about statistics, percentile ranks, satisfactory results, comparing pupil norms to school or district norms, and questions and answers concerning test results. Guidelines are Provided for reporting results to boards of education, which include information on report preparation and organization of meetings. The section on use of results for program improvement discusses test reviews, identification of areas of high and low scores, determination of the reflection of test content in curriculum, and recommendations for change. Answers to common questions asked by reporters about test results and sample news releases offer assistance in dealing with the media. A checklist of communication techniques for reporting to staff, pupils, parents, and taxpayers is also included, as well as sample district newsletters which report student test scores. (Author/JAC)

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Handbook for Reporting and Using Test Results

California Assessment Program

Prepared under the direction of the

Office of Program Evaluation and Research
Alexander I. Law, Chief

California State Department of Education

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Preface

The need for a document of this type becomes painfully obvious every fall when the latest test results are made public. Confusion, suspicion, and consternation often fill the air, if only for a few days. Many of the consequences of reporting local results spring from misunderstanding and poor communication. This handbook is designed to provide the test coordinator in each district with the special information and assistance he or she needs to help the public and the press draw accurate conclusions from the results of the California Assessment Program and to gain their support for the local educational program.

A survey of district practices and problems in reporting and disseminating test results conducted last spring provided the direction and content for this document. The County School Office Communication Specialists supported the idea for this document from its inception and helped to shape its initial focus. They also helped by keeping the report on target throughout its production and by providing essential information and materials.

Every effort has been made to keep the handbook at a practical level. This goal led to the inclusion of a variety of background summaries and illustrative materials which show what other districts are doing to meet the challenge of making test results meaningful and useful. School personnel are encouraged to use the materials in ways that will help them meet educational goals; therefore, they may reproduce any part of this handbook without seeking prior approval. The suggestions found in this handbook are just that—ideas gleaned from persons with years of experience.

Several individuals deserve special recognition for the time and effort they devoted to this project. Julia Stanfill, Public Information Officer for the Office of the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, was responsible for doing the initial research, conceptualizing the report, and preparing a first draft. Jerry Custis relied on first-hand experiences in reporting local results in writing the final draft of the document. Two other persons were very generous in providing information and guidance from the "firing line" perspective: Norman Ginsburg, Director of Research and Testing for the Ocean View Elementary School District, Huntington Beach; and Earl Owens, Research Consultant for the Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools. We in the Department of Education are grateful to all of these individuals and their organizations for their unselfish efforts on this important project.

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Introduction: How We Got Here and Why

Approximately 1.4 million California schoolchildren sit down at their desks each year and take a moderately difficult 20- to 40-minute test. The test is unusual in that the pupils who take it do not receive a grade. Instead, the broad-scale results will be used to judge their school's curriculum, method of instruction, and overall program effectiveness. Some citizens, in fact, will draw even broader conclusions from this testing–conclusions on the success or failure of entire programs of instruction or of California's public schools themselves.

That pupil testing has risen to such importance is not an isolated phenomenon. Throughout our society, cost-effectiveness and accountability have become cardinal. Stockholders keenly await earnings-per-share reports. Defense planners seek efficient means of weapons deployment. Even quarterbacks live or die on pass-completion statistics.

The Education Investment

Public education is being held to the same standard. Americans spend upwards of $50 billion a year on elementary and secondary education. Like the skilled consumers most of them are, they are concerned with what they get for their money. Whether Johnny can or cannot read remains a paramount concern of most parents. But they–and their nonparent neighbors–are asking other questions as well: Are current instructional methods working? Are there better methods? What will I get for the additional money invested? Where can improvements best be made? To these questions, mass testing of pupils seeks to provide answers.

Standardized testing as we know it did not spring forth full-blown. In many ways it resulted from the new, central role given education in the early 1960s. Better schools were seen as the most likely path to egalitarianism and improved social opportunity. Education was given greater attention, greater funding, and–inevitably–much closer scrutiny.

In 1961 California school districts for the first time were required by law to test pupil achievement. Because the choice of tests was left to each school district, however, comparisons in performance between school districts was difficult or impossible. In 1965 uniform reading tests were used statewide, and for the first time valid statewide conclusions as to performance in reading could be drawn. The trend continued. Leading educators were called together in 1969 by the Assembly Education Committee to discuss ways in which the reporting system could be improved. Their recommendations were made law in 1972 under legislation sponsored by Assemblyman Leroy Greene, Chairman of the California Assembly Education Committee. That legislation–now a part of the Education Code–is the basis of the California Assessment Program.[1]

Across the Nation

California was not alone in extending pupil testing. In 1964 a series of conferences convened by U.S. Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel resulted in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) project. Now directed by the Education Commission of the States and supported by federal funding, NAEP conducts random sampling in numerous states to evaluate the status of education across the nation. From Congress came the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act and other federal funding programs, and California itself sponsored such programs as Early Childhood Education. These programs added to the need for measurement to show how effectively program money was being used.

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[1] See the resource material for Chapter II for the full text of Education Code sections affecting the California Assessment Program.

Other states have taken a path similar to California's. Michigan, for example, provides a system of diagnostic testing to correct areas of weakness in pupil performance. Florida, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Texas, and others have programs like the California Assessment Program. Some states have adopted the NAEP exercises for the state level. In all, more than 30 states now have some type of pupil assessment program. Most assessment programs are tied into state educational objectives for reading and mathematics.

The Impact of Testing

Testing has come a long way in a few years. Teachers and test designers have learned far more accurate and sophisticated techniques in the past two decades. So, also, has the sophistication of parents and the public grown. Percentiles, medians, and other measurement terms have become widely familiar. Given information, much of the public is able to make clear judgments about success and failure in the schools. Clearly, not only pupils concern themselves with test results; their teachers, principals, and superintendents also have a considerable stake in the result.

Thus has grown the role of the testing director. To the previous responsibilities (of testing, evaluating results, and reporting them back to teachers) have now been added several more responsibilities of equal or greater significance:

- Reporting results accurately and concisely to boards of education, press, parents, public, and students
- Interpreting results to the specialists: teachers, principals, and other school district staff members
- Recommending improvements, where needed, in curriculum and instructional methods and organization

An Impossible Job?

What appears to be a difficult assignment is also a most important one. The results of testing form a crucial role in the way people judge, support, and fund their schools. The testing director must summarize, clarify, explain, and make relevant that which is most important in the copious data needed in the California Assessment Program (CAP).

To do so, however, is to do but half the job. Public interest in how the schools are doing varies from community to community, from group to group within the community, and from person to person. Thus, different information is demanded by persons in different positions. Testing results must be communicated in somewhat different ways to parents, pupils, teachers, nonteaching staff, administrators, taxpayers, and school board members.

Evaluation, communication, and explanation demand a planned, organized approach. The resource material in this chapter contains an outline of what some school districts are doing. The remainder of this handbook provides assistance to testing directors in performing their jobs effectively.

Who Is Tested in the California Assessment Program?

Grade	*Number of pupils*
One	313,919
Two	291,952
Three	289,990
Six	330,008
Twelve	245,700
Total	1,471,569

Figures are for 1975-76.

Resource Material for Chapter I

How They Do It in Other Districts

School testing directors in California were surveyed in the spring of 1976 on ways they use and report testing results. Excerpts from replies to the questionnaire submitted by directors in 550 school districts are presented as follows:

1. Which groups received the 1974-75 results of the California Assessment Program (CAP) for your district?

	Percent of school districts[2]
School board members	98
Principals	90
Curriculum specialists	48
Elementary teachers	78
Secondary teachers	28
Department chairpersons	25
Students	6
Parent groups	34
School advisory councils	39
Other	13

2. When did you report 1974-75 state assessment results to your school board?

	Percent of school districts
November	40
December	37
January	14
February	3
March	1
April	1
May–October	4
Never	0.5

3. What data from the state assessment report did you report to your school board?

	Percent of school districts
District level:	
District mean score (percent correct)	88
Percentile rank	99
Comparison score band	75
Interpretation index	76
School-by-school:	
Percent correct	52
Percentile rank	63
Comparison score band	57
Interpretation index	51
Subcontent area scores	38

4. Which of the following information did you include in the report to your school board?

	Percent of school districts
Results of other tests administered in your district	57
State assessment data for previous years	53
District-level 1974-75 state assessment data	78
School-by-school 1974-75 state assessment data	44

5. What degree of difficulty did you encounter in explaining the various parts of your report to your school board?

	Percent of school districts
None	38
Little	25
Some	15
Great	4
No response	18

6. How would you describe the manner in which the press reported 1974-75 state testing results?

	Percent of school districts
Accurately and objectively	46
Accurately, but with distorting headlines	21
Inaccurately	9
Other; don't know and so forth	24

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[2] All replies are based on a count of how many school districts checked a specific item. There is no adjustment for elementary, high school, or unified school districts. Some figures are, therefore, misleading. Although 28 percent of the districts replying indicated that secondary teachers had seen the results, the reader must remember that only 35 percent of the districts in the state have high schools and hence have secondary teachers to report.

7. Which of the following state assessment results were published by the press?

	Percent of school districts
District level results	
District mean score (percent correct)	46
Percentile rank of district	67
Interpretation index	30
School-by-school results:	
Average percent correct	13
Percentile rank	25
Interpretation index	11

8. What was the source of information for the newspaper coverage of state assessment results?

	Percent of school districts
Report prepared for school board	44
Interviews	27
Press release	23
Copy of school district profiles	18
Summary fact sheet	16
Copy of school-by-school reports	8
County	5
State	4
No response; don't know; and so forth	15

9. What practices have you found to be most successful in your district when communicating with the press about test results?

	Percent of school districts
Establish an on-going relationship with the press	47
Release the report prepared for the school board	38
Conduct personal interview with reporter	26
Encourage district-initiated contact with press	23
Let press contact school district	15
Prepare sample press releases	12
Hold press conference	7
Other	5

10. Which of the following practices do you employ in communicating school test results to principals?

	Percent of school districts
Distribute reports to schools	59
Hold group meeting	49
Review results with each principal	43
No response; don't know; and so forth	23

11. When are principals informed of test results?

	Percent of school districts
Immediately on receipt	70
Not until state release date in November	19
Other	1
No response	10

12. If you administer other standardized tests, are the results of these tests generally consistent with state assessment findings:

a. In terms of the rank ordering of schools (i.e., do the schools generally emerge in the same order in overall achievement)?

	Percent of school districts
Yes	63
No	9
No response; not applicable	28

b. In terms of the pattern of strengths and weaknesses revealed at the school level (for example, strong in reading, weak in mathematics)?

	Percent of school districts
Yes	66
No	9
No response, not applicable	25

13. Have state test data triggered further exploration into areas of weakness in your school programs?

	Percent of school districts
Yes	69
No	30
No response	1

14. Have there been any program changes as a consequence of state test results?

	Percent of school districts
Yes	55
No	41
No response	4

15. If you have discovered any successful techniques for communicating test results to various groups, please describe the techniques. Sample responses were as follows:

Personal presentation with time to answer questions.

Special presentation to reading specialists using skill areas to discuss progress in those curriculum areas.

Oral presentation using transparency.

Parents are given a standardized test themselves as a sample.

With parents: small group meetings to describe construction of tests, what purposes they serve, what scores mean, answer questions.

Present information at their level of understanding and in terms of their needs.

The school psychologist has a meeting with each faculty to explain and to discuss results.

Graphs made up from state reports to fit district profile are not useful.

Keep it simple for all groups.

II

A Profile of the California Assessment Program

The program of statewide testing shall provide the public, the Legislature, and school districts evaluative information regarding the various levels of proficiency achieved by different groups of pupils of varying socioeconomic backgrounds, so that the Legislature and individual school districts may allocate educational resources in a manner to assure the maximum educational opportunity for all pupils. . . .

Education Code Section 12821

The California Assessment Program (CAP) is a mandated state effort to measure the progress of pupils in the public schools. For this purpose annual tests are given to children in grades one, two, three, six, and twelve at times specified by the State Department of Education.

From the time of testing, a few months are required for the independent scoring contractor to score, compile, print, and distribute the results and for the Department to evaluate them. The results are reported each November in Sacramento by the Department and, in addition, are publicly reported by local school districts shortly thereafter. The law is specific in requiring the reporting of the results to the State Legislature, State Board of Education, and local boards of education; but most state and local educators also make sure that results are given in useful form to the media, parents, school administrators, teachers, and others.

A Little History

Statewide testing programs in California have always had their basis in the law.[1] They were first required by the Legislature in 1961. Acting under that law, the State Board of Education established testing in grades five, eight, and eleven and issued a list of approved tests from which school districts could select.

In 1965 the state's Miller-Unruh Basic Reading Act required that reading achievement tests be administered in grades one, two, and three, with the state to provide uniform tests to all school districts. In connection with this legislation, the State Board of Education eliminated the tests it had required for students in grades five, eight, and eleven and, in their place, required reading tests for students in grades six and ten in addition to pupils in grades one through three.

The law affecting statewide testing was changed again in 1969. Whereas reading tests had been required formerly in grades six and ten, the new legislation now required testing in reading and basic academic skills in grades six and twelve. At the same time the law mandated for the first time the reporting of results district by district.

The Present Program

The current California Assessment Program, brought into being by the signing into law of Assembly Bill 665 in 1972, represents a major overhaul of state testing. Both the structure and content of state testing have been changed. Testing in grades one, two, three, six, and twelve has been retained, but a grade one *Entry Level Test* has been substituted for the previous reading achievement test. The legislation eliminates the testing of scholastic aptitude in all grades. It permits the state to design its own tests to reflect the objectives of California schools rather than purchase tests from publishers and requires the state to pay the costs of the testing and scoring. Finally, the legislation permits the use of matrix sampling (for all tests except the *Entry Level Test*) as a means of estimating group achievement. (Matrix sampling is explained in detail further on in this chapter.)

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[1] For a summary and text of the present law, see the resource materials for this chapter.

Design of the Tests

Translating law into practice took considerable effort. Much was accomplished by advisory committees of experts: teachers, school district curriculum specialists, staff in offices of county superintendents of schools, State Department of Education task forces, members of professional associations, and college and university faculties.[2] The committee members first reviewed the basic subject material taught at each level to be tested and from the material derived specific content themes for testing. Their work was formalized in the publication of major objectives for each grade level and content area to be tested.

From these objectives the specialists turned to actual test questions. For the most part questions were selected from a pool of test questions already written and validated by commercial publishers. They were closely examined by linguists to eliminate imprecision, misleading terms, or bias. Field-tested and again validated, the tests were ready for use.

Timeline for the CAP

The *Entry Level Test* for grade one went into use in October, 1973, the first of the new tests in the California Assessment Program. Others followed in this order:

Grades two, three	Spring, 1974
Grade twelve	January, 1975
Grade six	Spring, 1975

Use of the Test Results

Test results have achieved major importance in guiding action on instructional management and in keeping the public informed. The publication of test results has had the following effects:[3]

- At the state level:
    - ○ Enactment of legislative mandates requiring schools to concentrate on specific subject areas
    - ○ Approval of funds for subject areas and school levels needing increased assistance

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[2] For example, the content of the grade twelve test was chosen by three advisory committees: reading (17 members); English (34 members); and mathematics (18 members). These consisted of 31 persons from local school districts, 23 from colleges and universities, nine from offices of county superintendents of schools, and six from the Department of Education.

[3] See Chapter V for more detailed guidance on the local use of testing results.

What Subjects Are Tested?

Outlined here are the subject areas tested at each grade level in the California Assessment Program:

Grade level	*Name of test*	*Subject areas*	*When tested*
One	*Entry Level Test*	Reading readiness, visual and auditory discrimination	Late Sept.–early Oct.
Two and three	*Reading Test*	Reading progress	May
Six	*Survey of Basic Skills*	Reading, written expression, spelling, mathematics	Late April–early May
Twelve	*Survey of Basic Skills*	Reading, written expression, spelling, mathematics	December

Greater detail on the content of each subject area tested may be found in *Interpretive Supplement* and *Test Content Specifications*, booklets mailed to school districts.

A Word from the Kids . . .

Taking tests may not rank up there with recess, but schoolchildren seem not to be perturbed by state testing. In a 1974 survey, teachers of pupils in grades two and three reported that most pupils actually liked being tested. Grade two teachers were typical. They were asked, "How many children enjoyed taking the test?" They answered: none, 3 percent; some, 20 percent; most, 66 percent; all, 11 percent.

  ○ Increased attention by the State Department of Education to areas of substandard pupil performance[4]
  ○ Identification by the State Department of Education of successful practices as models for statewide dissemination
  ○ Increased public awareness of problems and successes of California schools
  ○ Statewide assessment of special programs, such as the Miller-Unruh reading program

- At the local level:
  ○ Allocation of funds by local boards of education to areas needing greater assistance[5]
  ○ Greater staff attention, sense of urgency, and concentration on areas of substandard performance by pupils
  ○ Increased public awareness of problems and successes of school districts and individual schools and a growing awareness of underlying reasons
  ○ Availability of reference data for use in applications for grants and special program funds
  ○ Use of test results as a means of determining the effectiveness over a period of time of new programs or emphases
  ○ Use of test results as an aid in reviewing specific areas of need with local district principals, curriculum specialists, and teachers

The background and most tangible effects of the California Assessment Program have just been described. In the following section, answers are given to some of the most frequently asked questions about the nature and operation of the program.

Commonly Asked Questions About the California Assessment Program

Q. What are the purposes of the program?

A. In general the program provides broad information that may be used to evaluate school programs in individual schools or school districts or in the entire state. It is *not* designed to assess the progress of individual pupils or to evaluate teachers. The program has five main objectives:

1. Discover the special strengths and weaknesses of California schoolchildren—at the school, school district, and state levels—to aid in improving school programs.
2. Provide the public with evidence of the effectiveness of the educational system in teaching basic skills. The public, of course, includes such interested parties as parents, legislators, taxpayers, and employers.
3. Help evaluate specially funded programs such as ESEA, Title I; the Miller-Unruh reading program; and Early Childhood Education.
4. Provide information for research into effective program techniques, such as

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[4] For example, the Ad Hoc Advisory Council on Student Writing—created by Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles to improve high school writing ability—resulted directly from declining grade twelve scores in written expression.

[5] In one California school district, low reading scores prompted teachers to request and receive funds from their board of education for more thorough and frequent assessment of pupils' reading—plus additional materials and consultants. In another district, substandard reading scores led to the creation of a well-funded reading department.

discovering the characteristics of programs of high effectiveness.

5. Improve the educational system by allocating state funds most effectively to the public school system in relation to other recipients of tax dollars, to various educational programs, and to various parts of the state.

Q. Are the test results valid?

A. The design and method of developing and constructing the tests ensure their content validity. Further evidence of their validity comes from several sources:

1. There is a consistency of results from year to year in the same districts and in districts having similar characteristics.
2. In sample tests there is a strong correlation between results obtained by schools on the California tests and on other widely used standardized tests.
3. The background factors thought to relate to achievement levels (such as those reported annually with each district's results) are generally predictive of results.

Q. Are the state tests valid for minority children?

A. Yes. All tests in the state program were designed by California educators specifically to measure the progress of California children. Particular attention was given to using questions that are as valid for minority children as for all others.

Q. Do test results reflect the total of a pupil's knowledge and academic abilities?

A. No. The tests measure pupil progress only in basic skills. They do not measure knowledge in all areas of school study.

Q. Does the testing program determine the curriculum of school districts?

A. No. Questions are derived from basic subject material already under study in all California school districts. Testing affects local curriculum only insofar as it provides

The ABCs of Matrix Sampling

How can detailed conclusions be drawn about California schoolchildren from tests that contain only 20 to 30 questions? The answer is matrix sampling, a testing technique used in the state tests for grades two, three, six, and twelve.

Matrix sampling is a shortcut, but an accurate and valid one. In it, each child takes only part of a much longer total test. A second-grade pupil, for example, takes only 25 of a total 250 questions in the complete grade two test. (Thus, there are really ten different test forms for second-grade classrooms.) This matrix sampling makes it possible to have a wider variety of questions for each grade, thus testing the subject more completely. Yet, it does not test any child for too long a time. Statistical calculations make it possible to produce results for each school and district as if all the students had answered all the questions on the long test.

The following figures show the number of questions to be answered by each student together with the number of questions on that grade level's complete test:

Grade two	25/250
Grade three	25/250
Grade six	30/480
Grade twelve	31/558

In grade one, all pupils answer all 35 questions.

How does matrix testing work in the classroom? Each teacher's packet of tests already has been packaged with the different forms of the long test in mixed order. All the teacher needs to do is distribute them from top to bottom for the class to receive the proper mix of forms.

feedback information useful in making local improvements.

Q. Who are tested?

A. All students in grades one, two, three, six, and twelve who are present in regular public school classes during the period of testing each year.

Q. Who are not tested?

A. Children who are mentally retarded or educationally handicapped, certain children among those who are physically handicapped, and students enrolled in continuation high schools.

Q. Why are first graders tested during their first month in school?

A. Their test–the *Entry Level Test*–measures the level of pupil readiness for school instruction. It reports their starting point in such areas as immediate recall, letter recognition, auditory and visual discrimination, and language development. The test is *not* a measure of their school achievement; it is used as a basis of comparison when the pupils take the state reading tests in grades two and three.

Q. How long does the testing take?

A. The tests themselves take about 30 minutes for each participating pupil. Another ten minutes are needed before and after the actual testing period for preparation and collection of materials. In addition, there are practice tests in grades one, two, and three which are administered to prepare the children for the actual test.

Q. How can a pupil best prepare for the test?

A. Since the tests measure a pupil's development in broad subject areas, specific study or memorization is likely to be of no value. As always, pupils should get enough sleep the night before testing, have a good breakfast or lunch, and listen carefully to the teacher's oral directions during the testing period. Again, in grades one, two, and three, the practice tests play a prominent role in providing pupils with experience in taking a test at a time when their questions can be answered.

Q. Are the tests difficult?

A. Naturally, they will be seen differently by different pupils and teachers. In general, however, the *average* test question is of moderate difficulty. Each test contains a few very easy questions as well as a limited number of more difficult questions.

Q. May a parent see the test his or her child has taken?

A. Yes. All of the test questions are on file for public inspection in the office of each county superintendent of schools. They are placed on file there each year after the tests are given.

Q. May the testing program be used to evaluate teachers?

A. No. The testing program is designed to show results for entire schools, school districts, and areas of instruction. It does not provide results for individual children or individual classes. Because of these factors, test results are more likely to reflect instruction by many teachers over a span of years rather than the efforts of a single teacher during the year of testing.

Q. Who pays for the testing?

A. The state pays all the direct costs of testing.

Resource Material for Chapter II

What the Law Requires

Besides providing a general outline for operation of the California Assessment Program (CAP), state law mandates certain actions by state and local educational agencies. The following is a summary of the more important requirements:

Local Boards of Education

- Must administer annually state tests in grades one, two, three, six, and twelve and submit completed tests to the state for scoring (Education Code sections 5779 and 12823).
- Must report annually districtwide test results at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board (Education Code Section 12826).
- Must submit annually information on operational factors to the State Department of Education, on forms provided by the Department, for tabulation and analysis by the Department (Education Code Section 12848).

State Department of Education

- Must analyze all the results of the state testing program and report them to local school districts on a school-by-school basis (Education Code sections 5779, 12848, and 12852).
- Must report annually to the Legislature and State Board of Education the district-by-district results of state testing, including an analysis of factors that appear to affect the results significantly (Education Code Section 12848).
- Must equate tests to nationally normed tests so that the performance of California pupils may be compared to the national sample (Education Code Section 5779).

State Board of Education

- Must adopt the statewide testing program, require its annual administration, and provide tests to local school districts without charge (Education Code sections 5779 and 12823).

Education Code Sections on the California Assessment Program

The sections of the Education Code that establish the California Assessment Program and specify the obligations of various state and local agencies in the program are the following:

(CHAPTER 5.8. SPECIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL READING INSTRUCTION PROGRAM)

(Article 3. Testing and Program Evaluation)

Testing of Pupils in Grades 1, 2, and 3; National Norms; Duties of State Board of Education

5779. The State Board of Education shall require each school district to administer uniform tests to each pupil not later than his third month of attendance in the first grade. The first-grade entry level test shall obtain a composite estimate for each pupil of skills related to learning and memory, attention, visual perception, and auditory comprehension. The answer sheets shall be transmitted to the Department of Education for scoring. If no published test is deemed suitable, the State Board of Education may combine parts of available tests or develop a new test.

The State Board of Education shall also require each school district to administer uniform tests in reading annually to pupils in grades 2 and 3. Such tests shall be recommended by the Department of Education and shall be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval and adoption. If no published test is deemed suitable, the Department of Education may combine parts of available tests or develop a new test. Any test so adopted shall be equated to nationally normed tests so that the performance of California pupils may be compared to that of a national sample. The tests which have been approved and adopted by the board shall be printed or purchased and distributed to the various school districts in the state by the Department of Education. The answer sheets shall be transmitted to the Department of Education for scoring.

The State Board of Education shall develop a testing method that will obtain an accurate estimate of statewide performance of pupils in grades 2 and 3 in reading. Under such a testing method, the Department of Education shall determine whether pupils in a given school shall be administered the entire test or whether the pupils shall be administered a portion of the test which will be representative of all test objectives, goals, or categories of items on the entire test.

The procedure required by this section shall be implemented not later than the 1975–76 school year.

The State Board of Education shall determine the form in which the answer sheets for the first-grade entry level test shall be transmitted to the Department of Education for scoring, and the form in which the answer sheets for the uniform tests in reading for grades 2 and 3 shall be transmitted to the Department of Education for scoring.

The State Board of Education shall analyze the progress achieved by third grade pupils using the first-grade entry level test results as a basis for identifying comparable pupils receiving various kinds of reading instruction.

The State Board of Education shall adopt rules and regulations governing the time, place, and methods for administration of the testing program under this article.

Pupils who have been determined to be mentally retarded, as defined in this code, shall be exempted from the testing requirement imposed by this chapter.

Pupils who have been determined to be educationally handicapped, as defined in this code, shall be subject to the testing requirement imposed by this chapter, except such pupils shall be tested separately from regular pupils. The Department of Education shall annually prepare a comparative analysis of the scores or results of tests administered to educationally handicapped pupils and regular pupils. The Department of Education shall annually report to the Legislature the scores or results of the tests administered to educationally handicapped pupils.

The tests administered pursuant to this article shall be employed to determine each school district's quota of specialist reading teachers, as required by Article 4 (commencing with Section 5781) of this chapter.

Commencing with tests administered in the 1972–1973 school year, school districts shall submit answer sheets and related pupil information on a per-school basis.

[The corresponding section number in the new (reorganized) Education Code (effective April 30, 1977) is Section 60640. The new section number for each of the Education Code sections contained in this resource material for Chapter II is given in brackets at the end of each section.]

Scores: Use: Inclusion in Pupil's Records

5779.2. Scores for individual pupils on the first grade entry level test shall not be used by school districts or teachers for individual diagnosis or placement or as a basis for any other decisions which would affect the pupil's elementary school experience. Scores from this test shall not in any manner be included on the pupil's cumulative school record.

The State Board of Education shall determine which, if any, of the scores attained by pupils on the tests administered in grades 2 and 3 may be recorded on the pupil's cumulative school record.

[New Education Code Section 60641]

Report

5779.3. The State Board of Education shall direct each school district to report annually its methods used to assess pupil performance in reading during grades 1, 2, and 3. The Department of Education shall assist the school districts to improve their local programs of assessing pupil performance in reading.

[New Education Code Section 60642]

Remedial Readers' Scores; Evaluation of Reading Program; Report to Legislature

5780 The scores of tests provided pursuant to Section 5779 of those pupils in grades two and three who have participated in a remedial program shall be maintained and treated separately.

From a study of the results of these tests in districts which conduct a basic reading program pursuant to this chapter, and the test results in districts which do not conduct such a program, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall evaluate basic reading programs, and he shall report his findings annually to the State Board of Education.

The State Board of Education shall report its findings regarding the implementation of, and experience under, basic reading programs, together with any recommendations for any adjustments in the program, to the Legislature at each regular session. This report and the report required pursuant to Section 12848 may be consolidated into a single annual report.

[New Education Code Section 60643]

Grade Specification Changes

5780.1. Except for the first-grade entry level test required by Section 5779, the State Board of Education may replace the grade specification for the administration of specific tests pursuant to this article with a specification of age or time elapsed since the pupil entered school where such a specification is more consistent with patterns of school organization.

The Department of Education shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee explaining the reasons for replacing the grade specification. The report shall be submitted at least six months prior to any such change.

[New Education Code Section 60644]

CHAPTER 9. SCHOOL TESTING

Article 1. General Provisions

Short Title

12820. This chapter may be cited as the California School Testing Act of 1969.

[New Education Code Section 60600]

Legislative Intent

12821. It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this chapter to determine the effectiveness of school districts and schools in assisting pupils to master the fundamental educational skills towards which instruction is directed. The program of statewide testing shall provide the public, the Legislature, and school districts evaluative information regarding the various levels of proficiency achieved by different groups of pupils of varying socioeconomic backgrounds, so that the Legislature and individual school districts may allocate educational resources in a manner to assure the maximum educational opportunity for all pupils. The program of statewide testing shall identify unusual success or failure and the factors which appear to be responsible, so that appropriate action may be taken at the district and state level to obtain the highest quality education for all public school pupils.

[New Education Code Section 60601]

Prohibition of Scholastic Aptitude Testing

12821.5. No school district shall administer, in connection with the statewide testing program, or otherwise, any standardized group test which provides or attempts to provide a single measure of general scholastic aptitude of a pupil, to any pupil or group of pupils in the district, except:

(a) A school district may administer or allow to be administered scholastic aptitude tests for placement in special educational programs for mentally gifted minors provided pursuant to Article 14 (commencing with Section 6421) of Chapter 6 of Division 6 or in postsecondary education or for the purpose of determining eligibility of students for scholarship awards, grants, or other awards relating to postsecondary education.

(b) A school district, with the prior approval of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, may administer group scholastic aptitude tests for research purposes, provided, that the district has a Superintendent of Public Instruction approved group testing plan which includes:

(1) A current schedule of testing;

(2) A statement of purposes of the uses of the tests; and

(3) Provisions that such tests are administered and the results interpreted under the direct supervision of a qualified school psychologist, psychometrist, or school counselor.

[New Education Code Section 60614]

Definitions

12822. As used in this chapter:

(a) "Achievement test" means any standardized test which measures or attempts to measure the level of performance which a pupil has attained in one or more courses of study. It shall include (1) tests in basic skills courses administered annually and (2) tests in content courses administered from time to time as designated by the State Board of Education.

(b) "Physical performance test" means any test which measures or attempts to measure the physical fitness of a pupil.

(c) "Testing program" means the systematic achievement testing of all pupils in grades 6 and 12, and the physical performance testing of all pupils in any three grades designated by the State Board of Education, required by this chapter in all schools within each school district by means of tests designated by the State Board of Education.

(d) "Basic skills courses" means those subjects which involve, among other skills, memorization and mastery of specific functions, including but not limited to, reading, spelling, basic mathematics, and effectiveness of written expression.

(e) "Content courses" means those subjects which require the integration of factual matter, logical analysis, the solution by the student of posed problems, and the communication of ideas, including, but not limited to, literature, history, advanced mathematics, and science.

[New Education Code Section 60602]

Duties of State Board of Education and Department of Education

12823 The State Board of Education shall

(a) Require a testing program in all school districts.

(b) Require the Department of Education to submit and recommend achievement tests to the State Board of Education for approval and adoption. The adopted tests shall be printed or purchased and distributed to the various school districts in the state by the Department of Education.

(c) The State Board of Education shall develop a testing method that will obtain an accurate estimate of statewide performance, school district performance, and school performance of pupils in grades 6 and 12, in basic skills courses.

Under such a testing method, the Department of Education shall annually require that each district administer a statewide test to all pupils in grades 6 and 12. The department shall determine whether pupils in a given school shall be administered the entire test or whether the pupils shall be administered a portion of the test which will be representative of all the test objectives, goals, or categories of items on the entire test.

The procedure required by this section shall be implemented not later than the 1975–76 school year.

(d) Designate the physical performance test to be used during the ensuing school year.

(e) Adopt regulations for the conduct and administration of the testing program.

[New Education Code Section 60603]

Test Development, Publication, and Administration

12824. The State Board of Education may develop, publish, and administer tests of its own devising, and the board may utilize the expert services of any persons or groups of persons in public or private employment.

[New Education Code Section 60604]

Conduct of Testing Programs

12825. The governing board of each district shall, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, conduct a testing program within the district. The governing board may also administer other tests.

[New Education Code Section 60605]

Group Testing of Students from Foreign Countries: Limitations

12825.5. No group test directed to ascertaining the intelligence quotient of a pupil, except intelligence tests administered on an individual basis for the purposes of placement in special education programs, shall be given to any elementary or secondary pupil who has come to the United States for the first time from a foreign country in which English is not the primary language until such student has resided in the United States for two years.

[New Education Code Section 60606]

Scoring; Reports of Results

12826. The governing board of each school district shall report on a school-by-school basis to the Department of Education, pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the State Board of Education, the results of the achievement tests administered pursuant to this article.

The districtwide results of the testing program, but not the score or relative position of individual pupils, shall be reported to the governing board of the district at least once a year at a regularly scheduled meeting.

[New Education Code Section 60607]

Physical Performance Test Administration and Results

12827. During either the month of March, April, or May, the governing board of each school district maintaining any grade designated by the State Board of Education pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 12822 shall administer to each pupil in those grades the physical performance test designated by the State Board of Education. Each physically handicapped pupil and each pupil who is physically unable to take all of the physical performance test shall be given as much of the test as his condition will permit.

Upon request of the Department of Education, a school district shall submit to the department at least once every two years the results of its physical performance testing.

[New Education Code Section 60608]

Cooperation in Carrying Out Program

12828. At the request of the State Board of Education, and in accordance with rules and regulations which the board may adopt, each county superintendent of schools shall cooperate with and give assistance to school districts under his jurisdiction in carrying out the testing programs of such districts and other duties imposed on school districts by this chapter.

[New Education Code Section 60609]

Preparation for Tests

12829. With the exception of physical performance tests, no city, county, city and county, or district superintendent of schools or any principal or teacher of any elementary or secondary school under his charge shall carry on any program of specific preparation of the pupils within the district for the testing program as such or the particular test used therein.

[New Education Code Section 60610]

Construction of Act

12830. No provision of this chapter or Article 3 (commencing with Section 8571) of Chapter 3 of Division 7 shall be construed to mean, or represented to require, that graduation from a high school or promotion to another grade level is in any way dependent upon successful performance on any test administered as a part of the testing program.

[New Education Code Section 60611]

Grades 6 and 12 Achievement Test Results

12832. The State Board of Education shall determine which, if any, of the results attained by pupils on the achievement tests administered in grades 6 and 12 may be recorded on the pupil's cumulative school record.

[New Education Code Section 60612]

Grade Specification Replacement

12833. The State Board of Education may replace the grade specification for the administration of specific tests pursuant to this article with a specification of age or time elapsed since the pupil entered school where such a specification is more consistent with patterns of school organization.

The Department of Education shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee explaining the reasons for replacing the grade specification. The report shall be submitted at least six months prior to any such change.

[New Education Code Section 60613]

Article 2. Content Course Evaluation

Content Course Effectiveness

12840. From time to time, as the State Board of Education may determine, the board shall conduct studies of the effectiveness of the various content courses offered by the public schools of this state. Such studies shall include details of the specific objectives of the courses and the level of achievement attained by students enrolled in such courses and, for this purpose, the board may use the results of any test administered under the provisions of this chapter.

[New Education Code Section 60630]

Report to Governor and Legislature of State Board of Education's Findings and Recommendations

12841. Upon the completion of a study by the board pursuant to Section 12840, the board shall report its findings, and recommendations, if any, to the Governor and the Legislature not later than January 1 of the year succeeding completion of the study.

[New Education Code Section 60631]

Reports to Legislature; Contents

12842. In making reports to the Legislature pursuant to Section 12841, the board shall maintain the anonymity of all individual students involved. The board may make analyses involving other factors, including, but not limited to, general categories of pedagogies in use, type of district organization, geographic area, socioeconomic data, size of school district, or other analytical items which may prove useful.

[New Education Code Section 60632]

Cooperation in Carrying Out Program

12843. The governing board of any school district shall cooperate fully with the State Board of Education in making its schools available for studies; provided, that the State Board of Education shall provide all necessary materials and consultant services free of charge to the district.

[New Education Code Section 60633]

Federal Funds

12844. The State Board of Education may accept federal or other funds for the purpose of financing studies under this article. Such studies shall be conducted by the board on an ad hoc basis, and the board may utilize the expert services of any persons or groups of persons in public or private employment.

[New Education Code Section 60634]

Article 3. Testing Evaluation and Analysis

Annual Report of State Department of Education to Legislature, the State Board, and Each School District; Contents

12848. The Department of Education shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Legislature, the State Board of Education, and to each school district in the state containing an analysis, on a district-by-district basis, of the results and test scores of the testing program in basic skills courses, including tests administered pursuant to the Miller-Unruh Basic Reading Act of 1965 (Chapter 5.8 (commencing with Section 5770) of Division 6). The report shall include an analysis of the operational factors that appear to have a significant relationship to or bearing on the results. The analysis may include, but need not be limited to, the following factors:

(a) Demographic characteristics.
(b) Financial characteristics.
(c) Pupil and parent characteristics.
(d) Instructional and staff characteristics.
(e) Specially funded programs.

School districts shall submit to the Department of Education whatever information the department deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

[New Education Code Section 60660]

Consolidation of Reports: Single Annual Legislative Report

12848.5. The report to the Legislature required by Section 12848 and the report to the Legislature required pursuant to Section 5780 may be consolidated into a single annual report.

[New Education Code Section 60661]

Recommendations to the Legislature

12849. The State Board of Education shall make recommendation to the Legislature as the board deems appropriate concerning appropriate or necessary legislation with respect to the results of the testing program and the evaluation and analysis thereof required by this chapter.

[New Education Code Section 60662]

Study and Reports Concerning New Tests

12850. Whenever the State Board of Education designates a new test to be administered under this chapter, the Department of Education shall study the compatibility and test results of the new test and existing tests and shall annually report the results of such study to the Legislature at the same time it submits its report pursuant to Section 12848.

[New Education Code Section 60663]

Study of Selected Schools

12851. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall perform an analysis of selected schools to identify educational factors which produce the distinction between unusually high-performing districts and unusually low-performing districts, such performance as measured by standard measures of school achievement.

The schools selected for study shall be comparable in social and demographic characteristics and shall vary only on student attainment.

The study shall last two calendar years so that variables discovered the first year may be verified the second year.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall report to the Legislature by January 5, 1975, on the identification and description of those socioeconomic, financial, and educational variables affecting school performance which tend to distinguish between unusually high-performing districts and unusually low-performing districts. By January 5, 1976, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall issue a final report to the Legislature including information regarding the verifiability of the relative impact of the variables discovered during the first year of the study.

[New Education Code Section 60664]

III The Annual Timetable

For purposes of an orderly dissemination of test results, no school district shall present districtwide results of the testing program to the governing board of the district or release them to the general public until the statewide results of the program have been presented to the State Board of Education at a regularly scheduled meeting.

California Administrative Code, Title 5, Education, sections 1026 and 1060

Fall is the busy season for testing coordinators. As shown on the time/event calendar, the previous year's state assessment results arrive in the fall for compilation, reporting, and evaluation. In addition, the new year's testing begins shortly after the first school bell rings in September.

The wise testing coordinator has a plan. This chapter (1) provides information on the state's timing in sending test materials during three key months—September, October, and November; and (2) sets the stage for the presentation of material contained in the rest of the handbook:

How to interpret test results (Chapter IV)

How to use test results for improvement (Chapter V)

How to report test results to the board of education (Chapter VI)

How to report test results to the media (Chapter VII)

How to report test results to staff and community (Chapter VIII)

. . . all of which principally take place during these three weighty months.

Materials from the State

Later in this chapter, we review the first steps commonly taken by school districts when they receive test results in the fall. First, however, let us look at the individual pieces of material arriving from the state at that time.

School-Level Report[1]

The school-level report is presented as a computer printout on a preprinted two-page form. A school district receives duplicate two-page forms for each grade level tested at each school (except the results for grades two and three, which are combined in one report). The report gives detailed results for each grade level tested. Comparisons can be made within the district and with statewide averages.

Interpretive Supplement

Interpretive supplements are provided in booklet form to give detailed assistance in interpreting the school-level report previously described. Three separate booklets are published for grades two and three, six, and twelve.

Profile of School District Performance

The profile is a one-page computer printout on a preprinted form. In the top half is contained a summary of the districtwide results for each grade level and each content area, and the district score is shown in comparison with the scores of other districts in the state. The lower half of the sheet contains a report on various background factors in the district and a comparison of the factors with those in the rest of the state. The background

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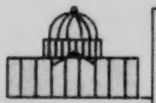
[1] Test results received in September and October may not be released publicly until the November meeting of the State Board of Education. Under a 1976 modification of the California Administrative Code, however, school district superintendents may share this information informally with their boards of education and staff as soon as it arrives from Sacramento.

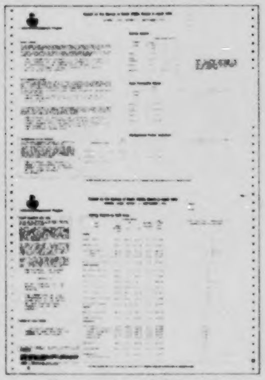
California Assessment Program

	September	October	November	December
 This Takes Place in Your District	You receive the school-level report and its *Interpretive Supplement* so that you can examine the test results for your schools for the last school year.	Grade one *Entry Level Test* is given. ● You receive: (1) profile of school district performance; (2) *Profiles of School District Performance: A Guide to Interpretation;* and (3) *Student Achievement in California Schools: Annual Report* for the testing that took place in the last school year. ● Regional meetings are held with California Assessment Program personnel. ● County superintendents receive test results for the school districts in their counties.	● On the day of State Board of Education meeting, you are free to release publicly your local results. You make a formal report on test results to your school district governing board.	Grade twelve test is given.
 **This Takes Place in Sacramento**		Scoring of the *Entry Level Test* takes place (at contractor's site).	● The test results are reported to the State Board of Education, the Legislature, and the media.	Scoring of the grade twelve test takes place (at contractor's site).

Annual Time/Event Calendar

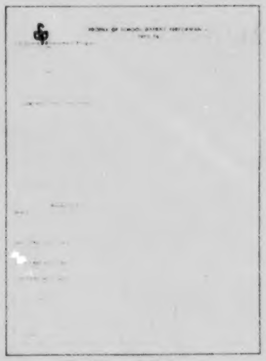
January	February	March	April	May	June	July August
You receive results of the fall grade one *Entry Level Test.*			Grade six test is given. Tests for grades two and three are given.	You receive results of December grade twelve tests.		

				Scoring, evaluation, and publishing of results for all grades takes place.		

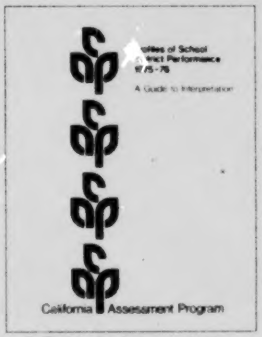


School-Level Report

Interpretive Supplement



Profile of School District Performance

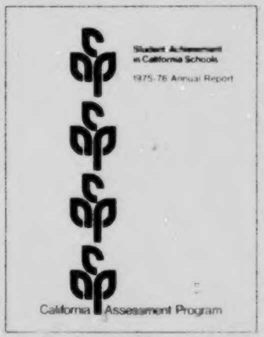


Profiles of School District Performance 1975-76

A Guide to Interpretation

California Assessment Program

A Guide to Interpretation



Student Achievement in California Schools

1975-76 Annual Report

California Assessment Program

Student Achievement in California Schools

factors included are in addition to the factors used to compute the comparison score bands.

Profiles of School District Performance—A Guide to Interpretation

The guide is a 26-page booklet that provides a considerable amount of information on the individual tests and the testing program itself. It explains how the tests were developed, what they measure, how they are administered, and how the test results and background factors are organized in the district profiles. The guide is necessary to understand how the various numbers, scores, and values are derived.

Student Achievement in California Schools: Annual Report

The 60- to 70-page annual report presents and analyzes the statewide performance of California schoolchildren on tests administered during a school year. A new report is issued each fall on the previous year's results. It contains three kinds of information:

1. Analysis by the assessment advisory committees of skill areas where pupil performance was notably strong or weak
2. Test performance of various subpopulations
3. Comparison of California achievement levels with national norms

A Few More Details

Most other testing events during the year are easily understood. A few words are in order, however, about the circumstances surrounding the reporting of test scores to the State Board of Education and members of the Legislature.

○ *First, the State Board.* The Board meets monthly (except in August), rotating its meeting site among the major cities of California—usually Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego. Board meetings regularly span a Thursday and Friday. The November meeting—at which test results are reported—is usually held in Sacramento, with the state assessment report usually scheduled for Thursday morning.

Each State Board member receives three documents: (1) *Student Achievement in California Schools: Annual Report;* (2) school district profiles for all districts in the Board member's home county; and (3) *Profiles of School District Performance: A Guide to Interpretation.* The Board as a whole receives one set of all district profiles.

As soon as the report has been made to the State Board, local districts are free to make public release of their results in their own communities. A district, then, actually may release its results on the same day as the State Board meeting.

○ *Second, the legislators.* Soon after the State Board meeting, each member of the California Senate and Assembly receives an annual report and the district profiles for all districts in his or her legislative district along with a *Guide to Interpretation.*

Information for the Public

The major news media already have been keyed in to the report of test scores. Details about how this affects your district may be found in Chapter VI.

News reports often generate requests from the public to the Department of Education for portions of the test results data. The Department honors all requests for school district profiles (and sends with them the necessary *Guide to Interpretation*). However, requests from the public for information about individual schools are referred to the appropriate district office. Although this information is public, the number of schools in the state and the length of the school reports render their reproduction unfeasible. Moreover, by contacting district offices, interested members of the public can receive more complete information than that revealed on the assessment reports. Inquirers can discover what special programs–mentally gifted or ECE, for example–are conducted, together with such matters as course offerings, classroom organization, and other local program characteristics not identified in the school district profiles.

The Steps Most Districts Follow

How do testing coordinators handle the arrival of test scores? The California Assessment Program surveyed school districts in the spring of 1976 to chart the typical flow of testing information and to uncover impediments.

The following is an anatomy of what commonly takes place. It is meant not to be prescriptive but simply to show what others are doing.

The Test Coordinator

In each district one person is charged with overseeing the testing program from the receipt of the tests through the interpretation of results. The nature of that person's job, of course, varies with the size of the district. In larger districts the person might have the title of director of testing and evaluation or assistant superintendent for instruction. In small districts, the testing coordinator is often the superintendent-principal. In nearly all cases the coordinator performs many different functions.

1. Preliminary Report

Assessment results (both in September and October) are mailed to the district superintendent and directed to the attention of the director of testing. Once received by the superintendent, the results are usually turned over to the test coordinator with a request for an abridged preliminary report.

The superintendent needs to be told the highlights of the results to avoid surprise or unexpected difficulty. The preliminary report should also call attention to any dramatic changes from the previous year's scores, especially declines. The report usually takes the form of a one-page summary of the results for all school so that any problem schools or subject areas can be spotted immediately. Although high scores are important, too, the superintendent is interested at this point in getting ready to meet problems. Chapter IV contains suggestions for the testing coordinator on analyzing the results for a school or district. The report completed, the testing coordinator briefs the superintendent on the highlights.

2. First Principals' Briefing

The superintendent convenes the district administrative council, which usually includes central office administrators and all principals. Each principal is given one of the two copies of the results for his or her school (the other being retained in the district office) and a copy of the accompanying *Interpretive Supplement.* (If principals do not have them, it might be useful to distribute copies of the three *Test Content Specifications* booklets. Each district received a set of the specifications last year. Additional copies are available for purchase through the Department of Education's Publications Sales.[2]) Besides reviewing the results, the coordinator reports any further information received from past regional meetings with members of the CAP staff. Principals are given one or two weeks to absorb the information before a second meeting is held.

Districts vary as to whether a principal at this time sees how his or her school compares with others in the district. The school report each principal receives, however, enables a principal to compare that school's results with those districtwide. Districts differ even on the time at which this material is given to principals. Although reports arrive in September, many testing coordinators are reluctant to give them out then, fearing information leaks before official release.

3. Second Principals' Briefing

Testing coordinators use alternative methods to help principals understand and use the results. The first method is to visit each school, reviewing with the principal his or her school's results and planning what action, if any, may be taken as a consequence. The second method is to meet again with the administrative council, at which meeting each principal summarizes the school's results and "defends" his or her findings. Other principals play the roles of questioning parent, skeptical teacher, or doubting board member. Such a confrontation is not for the timid, but the principal needs to be ready to answer such questions sooner or later.

At this meeting the coordinator can offer to be present when principals explain the results to their faculties. This meeting often provides the tipoff as to whether the results will be used successfully for assessment or will gather dust. A principal unsure of the meaning of the results will face a faculty with reluctance. Therefore, for any use of results at the school level, it is important that the principal understand them thoroughly or have ready access to someone like the testing coordinator, who does.

Likewise, the coordinator can offer to help with presentations to parent and community groups. Some coordinators put together multimedia programs and show them at meetings around their communities. They integrate test results with information about existing successful district programs. "Test results," one coordinator reported, "are the best friend we have. High scores can be used to illustrate the success of a program. And even low scores can be used to document the need for change."

4. Report to the School Board

The testing coordinator is usually the person who makes the required annual report of the district's scores to the local board of education. In addition to districtwide scores, about two-thirds of the districts also report school-by-school results to their school board.

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[2] Publications Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802; phone: (916) 445-1261 or (916) 445-3497.

IV Interpreting Test Results

This chapter contains information on making the best professional use of test results. It gives tips on how to understand scores fully. Then Chapter V outlines some steps for translating scores into program improvement.

This material does not require advanced knowledge of education or statistics. It assumes only a general knowledge of the California Assessment Program (CAP) and some basic understanding of statistics–things like means and correlation coefficients.

Becoming Familiar with the Statistics

In any analysis of data, the first task is to become familiar with the terms. Later, we will delve into some of the finer points of test result figures included in your reports. Now is a good time to be sure that you understand how these figures are reported.

One way to do so is to look carefully at a CAP school-level report for any grade, along with the *Interpretive Supplement.* One can page through the supplement, substituting the actual figures from your own report. By the time you finish, terms like *percent correct score* and *percentile rank* should have genuine meaning for you.

Checking the Results

Now the actual use of test results can be considered. The first question asked by testing coordinators is whether the results are correct. Errors in testing and reporting are rare, but they do happen. The consequences of error are so great that it pays to spend a little time verifying the scores.

Some errors can be uncovered quickly. A testing coordinator would look curiously at a sufficiently large (say, 60 pupils per grade), high-achieving school that scored at the 75th percentile this year in grade two reading, the 69th percentile this year in grade three reading, the 82nd percentile last year in grade six reading, but at the 25th percentile this year in grade six reading. The report could be in error. A bit of simple detective work here might save the embarrassment of issuing and then having to retract a report.

Three things can be done quickly to uncover errors. First, one can look at the reported number of pupils tested. If the number does not agree with the records for the particular grade, immediate evidence exists that the scores are probably not yours.

Large and unexpected changes in a grade level's scores ought to be verified. There are two fast ways to do so. One way is to talk to the teachers involved, asking them indirectly how well they thought their pupils did this year. It well may be that the teachers feel that there was an unusually large number of low achievers at that grade level, thus accounting for a significant drop in scores. If the teachers do not feel so, however, you have additional reason to be suspicious.

The second way to uncover errors is to compare new scores with past results. For instance, three years ago this year's sixth graders were in grade three and four years ago were in grade two. Test results for those years should be compared generally against the new scores. (For help in locating those old results, telephone a consultant on the CAP staff in Sacramento at 916-322-2200.) Of course, if you know that the general achievement level of your schools has gone down in the last few years, it may not be useful to compare the new and old scores. But if it hasn't changed much and the new, lower score still can't be explained, it is time to look at other standardized test results your district may have at that grade level. Even if the norms on such testing are not directly comparable to those used in the California Assessment Program, general comparisons can be made.

This chapter's section entitled "Comparing Test Scores Longitudinally" contains advice on comparing results of dissimilar tests. Or this year's grade six results can be compared generally with last year's grade six results. If this examination still has not explained large changes in achievement levels, one should call the CAP office in Sacramento. A consultant there may be able to help solve the problem.

The chances of receiving correct scores, however, are quite high. In its short life the CAP has issued more than 25,000 school-level reports. Of that number, about 100 requests to double-check results have been made, and fewer than a dozen instances of error have been found. Nevertheless, the importance of reporting accurate scores justifies a close look at your results.

Answering Common Questions About Test Results

When you present test results, some group may find reasons for doubting them. Human nature being what it is, people tend to reject results completely when they can find any flaw in them. Your being able to explain uncertainties will aid the process of accepting and then using the results.

Some objections really can't be answered, however. Teachers sometimes react to low scores by thinking that the score would have been higher if they had administered the test better. They often ask what the score would have been if they had not varied from the prescribed test-giving procedure. There is, of course, no way of knowing.

Most uncertainties, however, can be cleared up. The following answers show typical ways in which the testing coordinator can provide this useful information. Most of these examples contain data from the grades two and three *Reading Test* because of greater experience with them. As studies on the grades six and twelve *Survey of Basic Skills* are finished, similar information will be distributed.

Here are answers and analyses for nine typical questions:

1. What is the reliability of the test?

Reliability can be viewed in several ways. One way is the stability of results over time. The section in this chapter entitled "Comparing Pupil Norms to School or District Norms" contains detailed information on this topic. In summary, the matrix-sampling *Reading Test* now used provides far more stable results than does the *Cooperative Primary Reading Test* formerly used by the state.

Reliability of results can also be viewed as a coefficient of internal consistency–frequently called KR20 or coefficient alpha. That is, if a student gets one item correct, does he or she also get the next item correct and ultimately obtain a high score on the test? On a pupil basis, the KR20 for each form of the present *Reading Test* is at least .85. For the full test–all 250 items–the estimated pupil-level KR20 is .99. The coefficient alpha for school-level results (the most appropriate statistic, since pupil-level results are not reported) is .99. By any standard, then, the reliability of the *Reading Test* is extremely high. Similar results can be expected when such statistics are computed for the *Survey of Basic Skills* tests.

2. How were the tests developed?

All tests in the state program were developed in the same way. First, advisory committees were formed to help the Department's Office of Program Evaluation and Research determine the test content. The committees reviewed the frameworks in each subject as well as instructional materials and objectives provided by school districts. They chose the program objectives common to most instructional materials and district curricula. These objectives were arranged in content areas, and skills were defined in each area. The objectives and skills were printed in a preliminary document, which was reviewed by a large number of districts in the state. After modifications, the objectives were printed in the *Test Content Specifications* booklet series and became the blueprint for the development of the tests themselves. These booklets are available in each school district office.

Test questions to match the *Test Content Specifications* were collected either by leasing existing questions from commercial publishers or by writing and field-testing questions locally. Committees of teachers reviewed the questions for clarity and appropriateness and passed them on to linguists for screening for bias. From the pool of items that passed these tests came the final questions included in each test.

The *Teacher's Manual* and *Examiner's Manual* give more detail on the development of each test, its content, and the persons who served on the advisory committees.

3. Are the tests valid?

No test is perfectly valid. Every testing situation contains some aspect making the test less than

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perfectly valid. The real question to be asked is, "Are these tests more valid than any other tests that could be used for measuring the attainment of basic skills by pupils in California?" The answer, unequivocally, is *yes.*

No test can be valid unless it is reliable. In the previous question 1, the tests' high reliability was described, and in question 2 it was shown that the tests were designed specifically for measuring the performance of California students and the goals of California schools. The entire test development was concerned with the unique problems of measurement in a state as vast and diverse as California.

4. Why are test results for individual pupils not reported?

Even under the former state testing program, the state did *not* report test results for individual pupils. Any scores for individual pupils were a result of a district's requesting the scores from its scoring contractor. The state required that districts submit a frequency distribution of pupil scores but never possessed or reported the score of a particular pupil. No pupil scores have been or are reported because the purpose of the former testing program, as well as CAP, is program evaluation (at the school, district, and state levels), not the evaluation, placement, or diagnosis of pupils.

Earlier state-required testing had many drawbacks. The costs were large, and districts had to bear them; the tests were too long; and some tests were unrelated to the school goals. When the testing program was revised, it was decided to move to matrix sampling to provide tests long enough and broad enough to cover the wide variety of skills taught in California schools. Because no intention existed of providing individual pupil results, the move to matrix sampling was feasible and practicable. The factors in that decision were the following:

- There was a desire to limit testing time to about 30 minutes. Only matrix sampling could cover a broad content domain in such a short time.
- With the state assuming the costs, districts could use newly freed funds for their own program of further testing at the pupil level.
- No one testing system could likely satisfy all districts. Some prefer standardized tests; some, tests that are curriculum-imbedded and criterion-referenced; and some, their own tests. It would be impossible to select a single statewide test to satisfy all preferences.

5. All my brighter children got the easy forms, and the slower children got the hard forms. How can our percent correct score mean anything when none of the kids took the whole test?

We try to make all forms equally difficult. In many cases, such as the case of the grades two and three *Reading Test*, the difficulty level of all the forms is close to being equal. Teachers who believe otherwise have often looked at just one or two questions on each form. Some forms have harder questions at the beginning and some at the end; but on the whole, all are about the same. Thus, each pupil's percent correct score is a good estimate of what his or her score would have been if he or she had taken the complete test.

6. Our second grade reading score was pretty good except for our low score in vocabulary. If we were to raise that percent correct score by 20 points, what would our total percent correct score be?

This question is frequently asked once persons have overcome the natural initial hesitation to accept the results. It is a signpost of real progress with teachers and shows that they are ready to begin a careful examination of the skill area scores on the second page of the report.

To answer the question, one needs four pieces of information: the total number of items on the test (n_t); the number of items in the skill area (n_s); the percent correct score for the total test (p_t); and the desired change in percent correct score for the skill area (P_d). The first two pieces of information are available from the *Interpretive Supplement*, the next can be read from the school report, and the last is provided by the teachers. The revised percent correct score for the total test (P_{rev}) would then be:

$$P_{rev} = P_t + \left(\frac{n_s}{n_t} \times P_d\right)$$

For example, if a school with a grade two *Reading Test* percent correct score of 60.0 (24th percentile) were to raise its vocabulary percent correct score by 20, the percent correct score for the total test would be:

$$\begin{aligned} P_{rev} &= 60 + \frac{60}{250}(20) \\ &= 64.8 \text{ (35th percentile)} \end{aligned}$$

Determining What a "Satisfactory" Result Is

Any interpretation of results revolves around this question: "How well did we do in comparison to how we should have done?" Answering the question involves both objective comparisons and such subjective matters as one's own expectations and a district's goals.

As to objective comparisons, the first comparison to be examined is the comparison score band. It tells you what other schools and districts with similar background factors did on the average. For example, a comparison band ranging from the 25th to 45th percentile tells you that schools with similar background factors are scoring somewhere around the 35th percentile. This is not an exact means of comparison, but it is a starting place.

It is also good to take into account special circumstances that may be present. These include any background factors not detected by the comparison band. This information should help identify what a *satisfactory* score is provided that satisfactory means "about the average of schools similar to mine." Of course, some persons consider this definition inadequate. Some feel that the general average being achieved by all schools is too low, and others feel that the state average should be just a minimal goal.

Interpreting Differences Between Scores

By this point many testing coordinators are moving toward helping school staffs use results for program evaluation and improvement. This, of course, is one of the principal purposes of the entire testing program.

Such a close analysis often raises detailed questions of interpreting scores, among them these central concepts:

- How much of a difference from our *satisfactory* score is a big difference?
- Is this year's result an exceptional result, or is it part of a consistent trend?
- If this year's result appears somewhat exceptional, what is the likelihood that it will recur if we do nothing about it?

These questions are discussed in this part of the chapter. At times, questions in these areas may exhaust your knowledge of the testing program. You may then wish to call a CAP consultant for help.

Interpreting Differences in Percentile Ranks

A school's percentile rank in a content area is the percent of California schools that had a lower average score in that area. Thus, if a school has a percentile rank of 25 in grade six written expression, it means that 25 percent of the schools in California had a lower average score on that test. It does *not* mean, however, (1) that the average pupil in that school had a test score higher than 25 percent of the pupils in the state; or (2) that all the pupils in that school had lower scores than 75 percent of the pupils in the state. Other incorrect interpretations of percentile scores are also sometimes made.

Although percentile ranks are used because of their straightforward definition, they are not as simple as many think. In fact, many important nuances are frequently ignored or misunderstood.

Perhaps most serious is the misconception that percentile ranks are a linear scale. This misconception is exemplified by a phrase frequently printed in newspaper articles: "Percentile ranks are a scale from 1 to 99." Although true, the statement gives the impression that the difference between percentile ranks of, say, 10 and 20 is the same as the difference between 40 and 50. In fact, the differene between 10 and 20 is almost twice the difference between 40 and 50 because test scores tend to bunch up in the middle of the distribution. Since scores are much closer together in the middle, it is easier to pass 10 percent of the schools in the middle of the distribution than at the extremes.

Differences between schools in the middle of the distribution are quite subtle. For example, most people could not detect real differences between the reading levels of average pupils from schools scoring at the 45th and 55th percentiles. This is not true just of state testing percentiles but of percentiles in general. It is equally doubtful that most people could detect differences in problem-solving ability between someone with an IQ at the 45th percentile and another at the 55th percentile. There simply isn't much of a difference between these two points.

But what is an important difference? When do we begin to notice real dissimilarity between schools of different percentile ranks? Let's look first at grades two and three, which are given the same state *Reading Test*. There we find that a second grade scoring at the 90th percentile is at about the grade three average, while a third grade scoring at the 10th percentile is at about the grade two average. Thus, in the primary grades the 10th and 90th percentiles roughly equate average test performances a year behind and a year ahead of average, respectively. These two percentiles can be used as benchmarks. A school scoring at the 10th percentile should consider that its average pupil is significantly below the state average, and the inverse is true for a school scoring at the 90th percentile.

This is only a starting place, of course. The differences are readily distinguishable between pupils of schools scoring at the 10th and 90th percentiles. Likely, much smaller differences–say, between the 30th and 70th percentiles–would be noticeable too, though not as easily.

We have been speaking just of noticeable differences, not statistically significant ones. If a new reading program is tested among several thousand pupils, for instance, it wouldn't take a 25-percentile change to show that the program was having an effect. A change of a few percentile points–although it may have statistical significance–is subtle and not likely to indicate large differences. However, large changes of the type discussed earlier do translate into readily observable differences in abilities or achievement.

Interpreting Differences in Percent Correct Scores

Percent correct scores have also been frequently misinterpreted. Districts have been known to minimize differences between schools whose average percent correct scores on the *Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 12* differed by 9 percent. They reasoned that since one school achieved only 9 percent more correct answers than the other, the difference between them could not have been great.

However, differences this large in percent correct scores are substantial. One can imagine two classrooms of pupils taking a typical test constructed by a teacher (*B* students would average 85 percent correct, and *C* students would average 75 percent correct). If the first classroom had all *B* students, we would expect its average on the test to be 85. If the second class had half *B* students and half *C* students, the class average on the same test would be 80. In this case an average difference of just 5 percentile points would mean that half the students in one class were achieving at a level one grade lower than in the other class.

Only further research will tell us how much difference it takes in test scores before one detects a real difference in pupils. However, a general guideline might hold that a difference of one-half a standard deviation would be the start of noticeable change. In grades two and three this difference translates roughly into 5 percentile points; in grade six, 4 percentile points; and in grade twelve, 3 percentile points. Thus, if one school has an average percent correct score in grade three more than 5 points higher than another, one would begin to notice real differences in pupil achievement. This difference translates into 25 percentile points in the middle of the distribution but only 10 points or less in the extremes.

Comparing Test Scores Longitudinally

Two difficulties arise in examining a school's long-term trend in state testing:

- The tests have been changed over a period of time.
- The same statistics weren't always reported.

This section provides guidance in making and using long-term comparisons. Some instances defy exact comparison and require professional judgment by the testing coordinator.

First, let's look at the tests used during the past five years (Figure 1). Those that are directly comparable in Figure 1 are joined by arrows.

Thus, test results for grades one, two, and three are directly comparable only between 1971-72 and

Grade	1971-72		1972-73		1973-74	1974-75		1975-76
One	*Coop*	↔	*Coop*		*Entry Level Test*	Revision of *ELT*	↔	Revision of *ELT*
Two	*Coop*	↔	*Coop*		*Reading Test*	Revision of *RT*	↔	Revision of *RT*
Three	*Coop*	↔	*Coop*		*Reading Test*	Revision of *RT*	↔	Revision of *RT*
Six	*CTBS*	↔	*CTBS*	↔	*CTBS*	*Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 6*		Revision of *SBS: Grade 6*
Twelve	*ITED*	↔	*ITED*	↔	*ITED*	*Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 12*		Revision of *SBS: Grade 12*

Fig. 1. Tests used in California, 1971-72 through 1975-76

1972-73 and between 1974-75 and 1975-76. In grades six and twelve, no results since the 1973-74 school year are directly comparable to the previous year's results.

However, that two years are not directly comparable does not rule out longitudinal tracing. It would indeed be ill-advised to compare entirely dissimilar tests, such as comparing grade one *Coop* results (a reading achievement test given at the end of the school year) with *Entry Level Test* results (a reading readiness test given at the beginning of the school year). But other than that you can usefully look at trends if you observe the following points:

- Raw scores (or percent correct scores) will not be comparable. It is possible, though, to estimate the change for tests in the CAP. The average score on the original version of the *Entry Level Test* was about 1.5 points higher than the revised version. The original version of the *Reading Test* was about a half-point harder for second graders, but about a half-point easier for third graders, than the revised version. Similarly, for grades six and twelve the tests were revised for 1975-76.
- When tests are changed, differences in scores may be caused by differing test content, not by changes in program quality or student achievement. Differences in test content and the school's curricular emphases must be compared before a judgment is made. Even then, that judgment must remain tenuous.

The second problem, that of changing statistics, is not nearly so difficult. Direct conversion tables allow comparison of pupil norms (the way some districts report school scores for standardized tests) and school norms (the way the state has reported school results for the past six years). The following discussion should help resolve these difficulties.

Comparing Pupil Norms to School or District Norms

Occasionally, confusion exists over the way in which percentile scores are reported for state tests. The confusion is over whether a score represents (1) the average pupil in the school district; or (2) the comparative statewide ranking of the school or school district. Many districts have reported their results as a percentile rank of pupil norms (average pupil). Thus, a score of 45 means that the median or mean pupil score was 45 on the publisher's national pupil norms. State results, however, have been reported for many years as the ranking of districts in California (comparative statewide ranking). Thus, a district score of 45 means that its median—or mean in the case of matrix sampling—score was higher than 45 percent of the other districts in California.

The two statistics are not directly comparable. However, both have been available to districts and schools for the past several years. Thus, the relationship between the two sets of scores can be seen by examining results from previous years as well as current ones. For example, when the *Cooperative Primary Reading Test (Coop)* was last given as the grade three state-mandated reading test in spring, 1973, a district whose median pupil scored at the 59th percentile on publisher norms was at the 70th percentile of districts in the state. Thus, at that grade level at that time, the two numbers, 59 and 70, described exactly the same performance in different ways. (At the lower end of the distribution, the state, school, or district percentile rank is *lower* than the equivalent pupil percentile rank.)

If a district has continued to administer the former state-mandated tests, the two sets of information can be equated easily. Suppose, for example, that when a district administered the *Coop* to its third graders again this year, the median pupil scored at the 25th percentile on publisher's norms. However, on the state *Reading Test,* the district scored at the 12th percentile. The question is: Are the two pieces of information consistent?

Here we do a little backtracking. We can go back three years and find that the 1972-73 *Coop* scores placed the median pupil at the 27th percentile. That result would have placed the district at the 10th percentile of districts in California.[1] Thus, we find that there has been essentially no change in test scores over the past three years (comparing the former 27/10 with the current 25/12). The 25th percentile on the publisher's *pupil* norms and the 12th percentile on the California *district* norms are roughly equivalent.

The above technique doesn't always work. Sometimes two tests actually seem to give different results. Suppose, for example, that on the fall, 1973, *Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS),* a district's median pupil scored at the 37th percentile on the publisher's norms. That result would have placed the district at the 30th percentile of California districts. Then in 1975 when the district chose to administer the *CTBS*, the median grade six pupil was still at the 37th percentile, but the district's state rank on the new *Survey of Basic Skills* fell to the 15th percentile.

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[1] *Percentile Rank Norms Tables and Summary of Test Scores for the California State Testing Program: Grades One, Two, and Three.* Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1973.

In this case the reason for the change probably lies elsewhere, perhaps in differences between the tests. The *CTBS* may measure areas emphasized by the district more than the *Survey* does. However, since the *Survey* measures the common instructional objectives of California schools, it would seem reasonable for the district to reflect on why its pupils do better on the *CTBS* than on a test designed specifically for California. But the drop in percentile ranks need not be interpreted as a decline in program quality. It could be caused, for instance, by instructional emphases different from those measured by the new test.

In summary, it should not be assumed that different ways of reporting test results prevent comparisons. Many valid judgments still can be drawn, even during this transition period, especially in districts that still use the tests that used to be state-mandated: the *Coop*, *CTBS*, and *ITED*.

Determining the Reliability of Reading Test Scores

The information contained in this section can be used to determine how reliable specific test results are. It should be remembered that usually the results of more than one testing session are needed to determine how successful a program is. With the information provided here, one can decide how many sets of results are needed before firm conclusions about a program can be made.

Figure 2 shows the stability of test scores over a period of time. As can be seen from the two lines, the stability of school mean test scores is greater on the *Reading Test* than on the *Cooperative Primary Reading Test*. In other words, whatever one's feelings are about the stability of *Coop* scores, the *Reading Test* produces more consistent results year to year for all but the very small

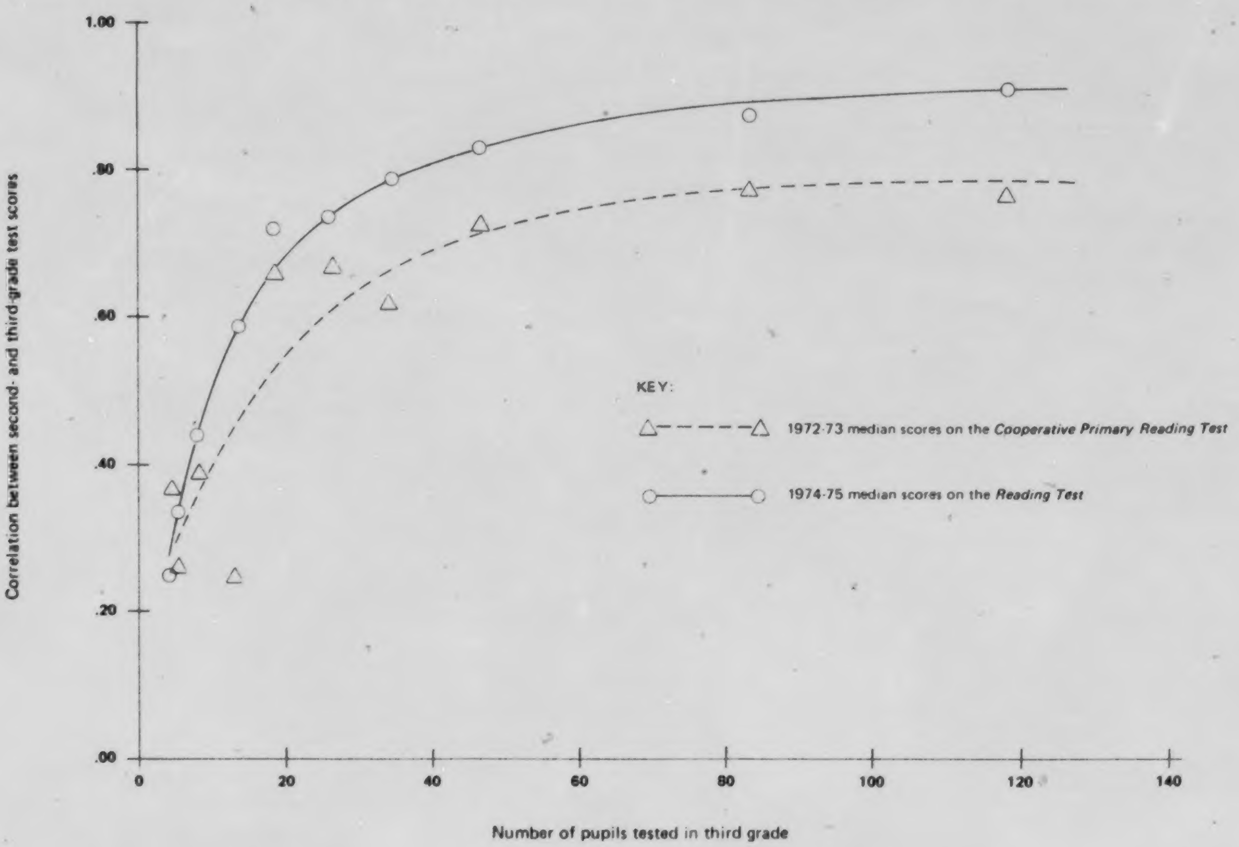


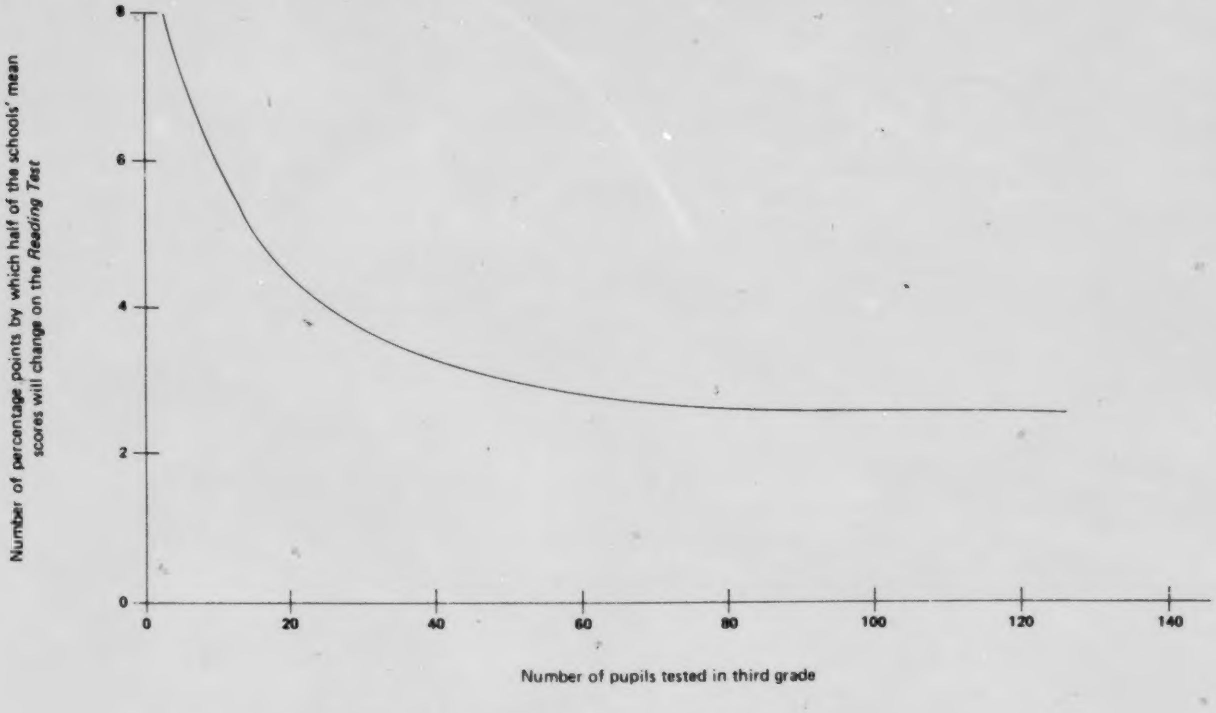
Fig. 2. School-level correlations between second- and third-grade test scores, by number of pupils tested in the third grade

schools (those with fewer than four pupils per grade). This finding may be important to emphasize to teachers, for some of them have the mistaken impression that *Reading Test* scores are less stable. If teachers continue to hold that impression, they might be slow to initiate change on the basis of *Reading Test* results.

Given the test results of one year, some may inquire about the expected range of scores for the next year of testing. That answer can be obtained from Figure 3. Fifty percent of the school mean scores for schools of a given size change by less than the value of the line. Thus, among schools annually testing about 40 pupils in the third grade, half see their mean *Reading Test* score change by 3.3 percent or less. Of course this result is an average for all schools, regardless of how much they have changed between testings. A school with a stable program and personnel has better than a fifty-fifty chance that its scores will change less than the amount given in the table.

Another approach to the question of stability of scores is the one taken in Figure 4. The graphics in Figure 4 combine both theory and actual data. Suppose the population statewide would remain constant and the same types of pupils would go to each school year after year. Suppose, too, that nothing in the schools changed; the programs, teachers, facilities, and administration all stayed the same. If this situation went on for a long time, the average test score over a period of time could be called the *true score* for that school, and each year's test results would be an estimate of the school's true score.

Of course such stability does not exist. But the current true score for a school can be estimated, given current testing data. From Figure 4 you can find the probability that the average score for one to four years of results for a school is within 5 percent of its true score. For example, if a school annually tests 40 pupils at grade three, there is a 70 percent chance that the average score achieved by this year's class is within 5 percent of the school's true score. If the average for two years is used, the probability jumps to .85 that the average is within 5 percent of the true score. Averaging results over three and four years raises this probability to .90 and .92, respectively.



NOTE: Figure 3 is to be read as follows: Fifty percent of the schools with 40 pupils tested at the third grade will have a mean *Reading Test* score within 3.3 percent of their mean *Reading Test* score of the previous year.

Fig. 3. Projected variations in third-grade *Reading Test* scores, by number of pupils tested

These probabilities are arrived at conservatively. One usually can be more certain of knowing the true score of a school than the stated values. One reason is that the illustration in the figure assumes that the reader has absolutely no knowledge about the achievement level of students in that school except for scores on the *Reading Test*. Knowledge of other test scores, familiarity with students or former students, and any other independent knowledge of the school raise the probability that one can pinpoint the true score of a school. A second reason is more statistical in nature; that is, the correlations are based on the test results from all schools, many of which had changes in their true scores from year to year. This additional source of variation, which could be minimal in a stable school in a stable community, decreases the probability values reported in the table.

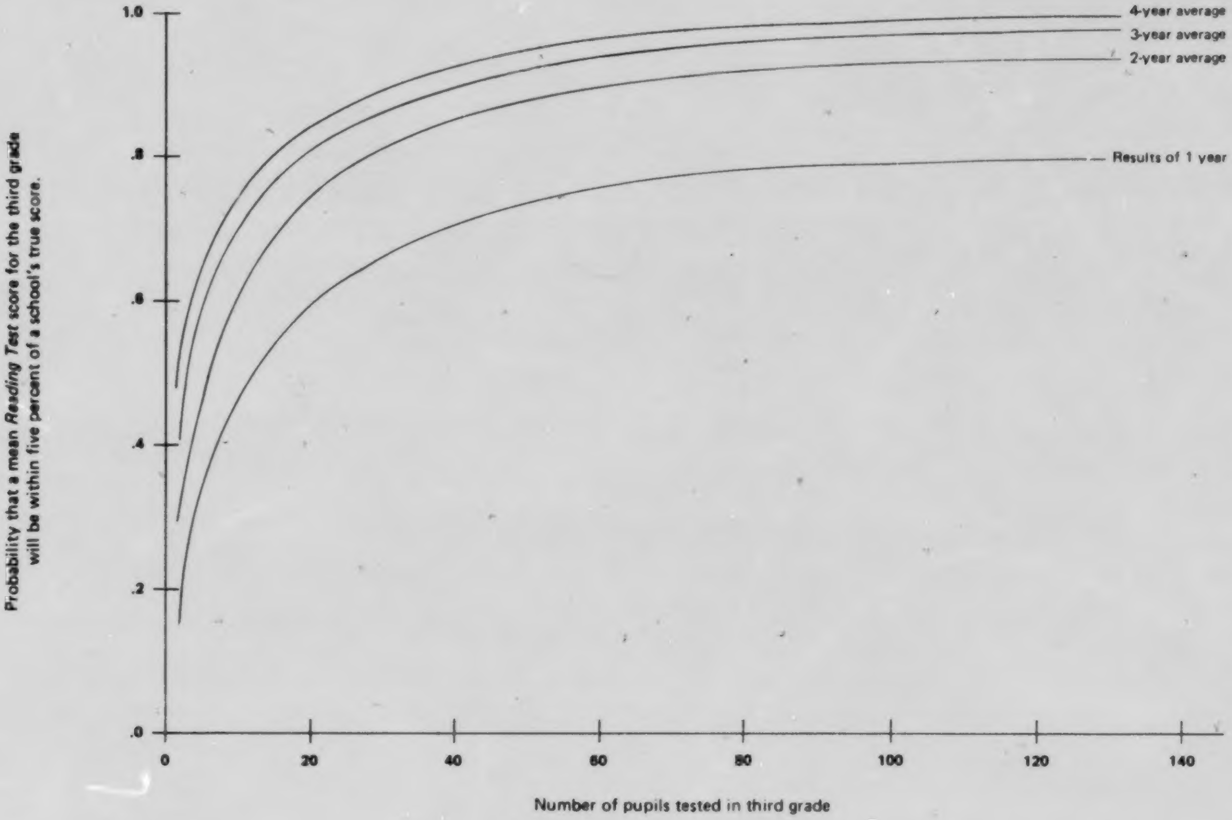


Fig. 4. Probability that a mean *Reading Test* score for the third grade, averaged over one, two, three, or four years, will be within 5 percent of a school's true score, by number of pupils tested

V

Using Test Results for Program Improvement

By now you have a firm understanding of test results. You have been able to examine them in light of their comparison score bands. You have been able to review previous test results, determining whether the present results are part of a significant trend. The remaining steps in a program evaluation are:

1. Reviewing the appropriate test with the teachers
2. Identifying areas of particularly high or low scores
3. Determining how well the test content is reflected in the curriculum
4. Recommending changes

These steps are explained in the following paragraphs.

Reviewing the Test

Once teachers understand the overall results on page one of the *Report on the Survey of Basic Skills,* they should examine the skill area results on page two. They should now start developing strategies for improving specific parts of the program.

You should direct the attention of the teachers to the meaning of the skill area terms and the ways in which skills were measured on the test. The principal sources of information are the skills charts in the interpretive supplements and the *Test Content Specifications* booklets. Separate booklets are published for reading, mathematics, and written expression (including spelling). The Department of Education has mailed one copy of each booklet to each district. Additional copies are available from Publications Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802; telephone (916) 445-1261 or (916) 445-3497. A secondary source is *Student Achievement in California Schools: 1974-75 Annual Report.* This book provides sample test items for selected skill areas and contains a detailed discussion of the analysis of statewide results. A similar publication is planned for each year. *Student Achievement* may also be ordered from the above address.

Identifying Areas of High and Low Scores

After teachers have reviewed these documents, they should understand the terms for each skill area and the method of measuring each area. They are now ready to interpret information on the second page of the *Report on the Survey of Basic Skills.*

The score for each skill area is compared to its respective content area score. Naturally, a skill area score can be either significantly lower than the content area score, about the same, or significantly higher. The difference is shown by whether the series of dashes representing the skill area scores is completely below (to the left of) the *X* representing the content area score, overlaps the *X*, or is completely above it.

It often is useful to make three lists of skill areas (one list for each category of possible result) and to give extra attention to any area that is extremely different. The interpretation of these lists depends on the overall assessment of the total content area. For example, if a content area score has been judged to be very low, it may be necessary to redevelop the entire curriculum for that area. In this case, finer analyses will not be necessary or useful. More typically, however, the total score will be judged to be within reason, and a few skill areas will be identified as needing improvement.

Determining the Reflection of Test Content in the Curriculum

One reason for a careful review of the test content is to make sure that the material being tested is the same as that being taught in your classrooms. If it is not, low scores do not necessarily mean low achievement but only different areas of achievement.

If teachers' objectives are different from those in the *Test Content Specifications,* the teachers need to determine whether they should adjust their objectives. Although there is no state-prescribed set of objectives, the *Test Content Specifications* were drawn largely from the state curriculum frameworks. As such, they reflect the orientation of a vast majority of California school districts.

A decision to redirect learning toward the content listed in the *Test Content Specifications* means that a major curriculum development effort will come out of this year's test review. Reviews in future years can then focus on the extent to which pupils master the stated objectives.

If a district rejects the content listed in the *Test Content Specifications,* it must develop its own equivalent document and its own instruments. Then, when future state test results show that pupils are not mastering the content of those tests, the district can provide information to teachers, parents, school board members, and the public as to how well its local objectives are being met.

Recommending Changes

By this time you may be near to conclusions about your instructional program, which may be strong or may need improvement in part or whole. The weak parts may come from improper emphasis or ineffective methods of presentation. If you have determined such causes and have developed proposed solutions, you will want to start putting the changes into use.

On the other hand you may need more information before you are willing to judge the achievement levels of your pupils. A frequent reason for this conclusion is the belief by teachers that low scores are caused by poor test administration procedures. In that case action is needed to ensure that next year's results will be usable. This sometimes is the only conclusion that comes out of a first-time review of results, but it should be viewed as a real step forward. Although it may be discouraging to wait another year, you will know that a careful review of the results will be possible next year.

Your professional judgment may tell you to wait for another year's results before reaching final conclusions. However, you should commit your tentative conclusions to paper now while noting the information you will need next year to confirm or refute them.

Although you already may know how you want to carry out a program review, a four-page, three-step outline used successfully by one district follows this section for your use. Each school staff in the district, assisted by central office staff, used the form to guide its program review. CAP results served as a focal point for the review. A summary of the findings of each school staff was presented to the school board. Recommendations tended to fall into three categories: instructional modifications/changes, test administration readjustments, and staff development directions/redirections. They were color-coded before going to the board (with recommendations on instructional modifications/changes outlined in yellow; test administration readjustments, in blue; and staff development directions/redirections, in pink), making the report clearer to the board.

A PLAN FOR ANALYZING CALIFORNIA ASSESSMENT PROGRAM DATA

TOPIC: PROGRAM EVALUATION TECHNIQUES/PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

GOAL: To use all evaluation data in such a way that continuous program improvement is promoted toward established district goals

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OBJECTIVE: To use data from the California Assessment Program in such a way that programs designed to promote the "acquisition of basic academic skills" are continuously improved.

STEP I

REVIEW THE CONTENT OF THE TEST IN RELATION TO THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM TO DETERMINE THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE TEST IS TESTING WHAT IS BEING TAUGHT.

PART I

a. First determine what is meant by each content area listed below by examining the test content specifications in reading for grades two and three.

b. Next determine the degree of emphasis given to each content area in the instructional programs offered at your school in grades two and three.

(Use the scale below to indicate the degree of emphasis.)

1 - Heavy emphasis
2 - Moderate emphasis
3 - Minor emphasis
4 - No emphasis

	Grade 2	Grade 3
Word Identification	______	______
Phonetic analysis	______	______
Consonants	______	______
Vowels	______	______
Vocabulary		
Denotational	______	______
Relational	______	______
Synonyms	______	______
Comprehension	______	______
Literal	______	______
Details	______	______
Interpretive	______	______
Details	______	______
Main Idea	______	______
Study-Locational	______	______

STEP I (continued)

REVIEW IN THE ANNUAL REPORT TABLES ON READING, WRITTEN EXPRESSION, AND MATHEMATICS IN RELATION TO THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS IN GRADES SIX AND TWELVE.

PART II

a. First determine what is meant by each content area listed below by examining the tables in the annual report.
b. Next determine the degree of emphasis given to each content area listed below in the instructional programs offered in grades six and twelve.

(Use the scale below to indicate the degree of emphasis.)

1 - Heavy emphasis
2 - Moderate emphasis
3 - Minor emphasis
4 - No emphasis

	Grade 6
Word identification	______
Vocabulary	______
Comprehension	______
Literal	______
Interpretation/Critical	______
Sentence recognition	______
Sentence manipulation	______
Capitalization	______
Punctuation	______
Word forms	______
Language choices	______
Standard usage	______
Relationships	______
Word forming	______
Arithmetic	
Number concepts	______
Whole numbers	______
Fractions	______
Decimals	______
Geometry	______
Measurement	______
Probability and statistics	______

	Grade 12
Vocabulary	______
Comprehension	______
Literal	______
Interpretation/Critical	______
Study-locational	______
Sentence recognition	______
Sentence manipulation	______
Capitalization and punctuation	______
Paragraphs	______
Word forms	______
Language choices	______
Arithmetic	
Number concepts	______
Whole numbers	______
Fractions	______
Decimals	______
Algebra	______
Geometry	______
Measurement	______
Probability and statistics	______

STEP II

ANALYZE YOUR SCHOOL'S TEST RESULTS IN RELATION TO YOUR SCHOOL'S INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM, BACKGROUND FACTORS, AND TEST ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES; AND YOUR STAFF'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TEST.

a. First identify subcontent areas which are low and which do not overlap with other bands.

b. List these areas below. (See school-level Reading Test results by content area.)

____

____

____

____

____

c. Analyze the reasons for (causes behind) each of the low, nonoverlapping bands above. Circle the areas above which you and your staff feel are low because of a low degree of emphasis.

d. Indicate below what your staff feels are the causes behind the low scores on the areas of high percentage of instructional emphasis you identified above.

____

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e. Analyze the accuracy and completeness of the background information supplied for your school. Note any inconsistencies, new awareness, and so on.

____

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____

f. Evaluate test administration procedures (e.g., direction giving, time of the day, and so on). One might ask, for example, whether students were instructed to give their best answer to every single question.

g. Assess staff attitudes and general climate in relation to the test.
To what extent does a degree of positive, healthy concern exist?______________
To what extent are staff members able to deal with the subject of testing analytically and objectively?______________________

STEP III

IDENTIFY A PLAN.

a. Review your responses to the questions included in steps I and II. What direction do you and your staff intend to take on the basis of information you have identified?

In Chapter VI . . .

- Planning Your Report to the Board
- Identifying the Contents of the Board Report
- Examining Sample Sections from Other Districts' Reports
- Organizing the Board Meeting

VI Reporting Results to Boards of Education

The districtwide results of the testing program, but not the score or relative position of individual pupils, shall be reported to the governing board of the district at least once a year at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Education Code Section 12826

"Mr. President and members of the board of education . . . " does not have to be your last noncontroversial comment on the evening you present test results. With the right technique, the benefits of a clear, concise, complete report can shine through even the gloom of poor scores. All it takes is planning, planning, planning. Here is the planning procedure:

- *Planning 1:* Plan what you are going to say. Do not just cast the test results into the meeting hall. You're the expert; organize and interpret the test results. Make the board and audience see the real meaning and significance of the results. Make your report complete so as to stop misinterpretations before individuals start making them.
- *Planning 2:* Compose–again–a clear, concise, complete written board report. Much of this chapter provides tips on the organization and writing of the report.
- *Planning 3:* Know in advance who is responsible for what at the board meeting. Does the testing coordinator handle the whole show? Or do the superintendent and other district administrators step in with their own words of interpretation and future plans? Plan the presentation in advance.

The reception that greets you probably has as much to do with the quality of the report itself as with the scores. This point is sometimes obscured by the nearly unavoidable negative tenor in which many such board reports are given. Be crisp and be positive.

The successful board report leaves board members and audiences with the feeling that they know the results thoroughly. They know what's wrong, what's right, how you feel about the test results, and what you're going to do about them.

Examining Some Interesting Questions

However, there are always some sticklers present with interesting–but difficult–questions. Be ready for them. Often their questions are variations on the following:

"Are you satisfied with these results?"

"Why are our pupils doing better in reading than in spelling?"

"Why do the children at School A achieve better than those at School B?"

"What can we do to raise these scores?"

"What are you planning to do now with these new results?"

"School A seems to be doing better than the others. What's its secret and should we get the other schools to adopt it?"

"Is that reading program we started last year working out?"

The wise testing coordinator and superintendent have answers ready; often they already answered the questions in the text of their report. Some well-prepared superintendents have even been known to carry around 3-by-5 cards with salient testing information for a few weeks after scores are

Getting Along with the Board: An Insider's Advice

"School boards know a great deal about what's happening in the areas of testing, evaluation and accountability," reports one member of the California School Boards Association (CSBA) staff. What they most need, he thinks, is help in getting a handle on the current year's results.

But it's always a good idea to start with the basics, advises Edmund L. Lewis, CSBA's Assistant Executive Secretary for Instructional Services. "They need to understand what a 'normed test' means, what 'average' means, what 'criterion-referenced testing' means, what 'matrix sampling' means . . . what these terms mean to their district.

"More than half of the school districts in the state have a thousand or less average daily attendance, and board members need to understand the effect of a small sample on scores." Another obvious point: Membership on school boards changes frequently. Newly elected members often arrive with good intentions but with little understanding of testing.

"Boards," continues Mr. Lewis, "also need a clearer understanding of the difference between testing and evaluation. It's important for them to know what specifically happens in evaluation at the teacher level, the principal level, the district level, and the state level . . . and what role testing plays in the evaluation process."

What about the board meeting itself? "The key question that needs to be answered is not 'what' but 'why' a certain score is above or below the anticipated achievement level," advises Mr. Lewis.

"Look at the scores for trends," he continues. "Reports on any school pattern mean more when there's a three- to five-year comparison. If you have a local testing program that tests local objectives, present those results also to show another measurement. Avoid stereotyping when looking at the various statistical factors. This state is so varied, we must get away from generalizations that are damaging."

reported. That way, whenever they are questioned by board member, news reporter, or parent, they have more than enough facts readily available.

Preparing the Board Report

A basic board report might be organized along these lines:

- Introduction
- Summary of Results and Interpretation
- Detailed Results
- Background Factors and Other Testing Data
- Recommendations

The material on the following pages presents each of the five recommended sections of the report in more detail. First, the typical contents of each section are described. Then, examples drawn from California school district board reports are shown as sources for ideas and techniques.

• Introduction

The purpose of the testing is explained in the introduction; and the number of children tested, their grade levels, the subject areas, and the time of the tests are given. The tests are named, and the report may explain what each test measures. The nature and uses of the California Assessment Program (CAP) are outlined. Mention may be made of district testing which is to be profiled in the board report. Examples of introductory material for the report to the governing board of the school district are presented on the pages that follow.

1 EXAMPLE OF A Concise Introductory Paragraph

INTRODUCTION

During the 1974-75 school year, all second and third-grade pupils in the Cabrillo Unified School District, 221 and 208, respectively, were tested in reading achievement. Pupils in grade six (253) and grade twelve (185) were tested in the basic skills of reading, written expression, and mathematics. The testing procedure for the second, third, sixth, and twelfth-grade tests was first introduced during the 1973-74 school year. It is a matrix sampling procedure. In matrix sampling every student does not take the same test form, only a portion of a very long test. Statistical calculations in the matrix sampling procedure enable preparation of a district profile just as if all students had taken all items in a long test. Matrix sampling is an efficient testing procedure when the purpose of the testing is to obtain information about the performance of groups of students. Because of this testing procedure, it is not possible to obtain individual students' scores. Even information about classroom performance would be useless because of the small number of students taking the test. The state does not report the scores of individual students or classroom performance because of the matrix sampling procedure.

from Cabrillo Unified School District

2 EXAMPLE OF An Introduction to the Contents of the Report

During the 1974-75 school year, the Huntington Beach Union High School District initiated a comprehensive program assessment plan. This plan was designed to provide program assessment information to decision-makers at all levels throughout the district. The intent of a comprehensive program assessment plan is twofold. The information obtained provides an indication of the status of the schools and the district in terms of student performance and perceptions. In addition, the information obtained provides a basis for priority decisions regarding the improvement of various aspects of the educational program. Thus, the intent of program assessment is not to prove or disprove the worth of various aspects of the educational program but rather to improve the quality of the educational program.

The program assessment report contained in this document includes data from a variety of sources. Any given set of data taken in isolation may be easily misinterpreted; therefore, this report attempts the integration of several data sets in an effort to place each in perspective with the others. The data presented in this report are organized under six major headings, as follows:

1. General Information

   This section includes demographic and descriptive data regarding factors that tend to influence student performance on a group basis.

2. State-Mandated Testing

   The ults of t te-mandated phys al performance (grade 10) ski) testing nted in ction.

from Huntington Beach Union High School District

3 EXAMPLE OF Explanation of the Tests Used

Statewide testing at selected grade levels has been a phenomenon in the California public schools since 1961. Over the years there have been a number of changes in the tests employed and the grade levels tested. During the 1974-75 school year, two types of statewide testing were carried out in the Huntington Beach Union High School District. The Survey of Basic Skills was administered to twelfth grade students in January of 1975 under a matrix-sampling format. The Physical Performance Test for California was administered to tenth grade students during March, April, and May of 1975.

Survey of Basic Skills. The Survey of Basic Skills is a test developed by the State of California for use in the California Assessment Program. The Survey measures student performance in the content areas of reading, written expression, spelling, and mathematics. This test was administered to twelfth grade students statewide for the first time in January of 1975 under a matrix-sampling format. The matrix-sampling technique differs from typical testing techniques in that each student completes only a small portion of the entire test rather than completing the entire test. Student scores are then aggregated at the school and district levels to provide estimates of group performance. This type of testing does not produce individual student data.

In addition to test data, the State Department of Education also collects other data to group similar schools and districts and predict school and district performance within a comparison band or range. These data were discussed under the general information section of this report.

from Huntington Beach Union High School District

4 EXAMPLE OF An Explanation of the Purpose of Testing

The purpose of the California State Assessment Program is to answer the question: "At what level are students in a district achieving after X years of schooling?" The objectives of the program were arranged into content areas, and skills were defined for each content area. The content and skill areas that were assessed in the 1974-75 school year are presented in Table 1. Also displayed in the table are the number of test items, the test format, the number of test forms, and the number of items per test form.

The test format for all tests except the Entry Level Test was a matrix sampling procedure. In most testing programs each student is given the same test as every other student in that grade. In matrix sampling, however, every student does not take the same test form but only a portion of a very long test. For example, the Reading Test is divided into ten forms so each second grade pupil takes one-tenth (25 items) of the entire test. Statistical calculations in the matrix sampling procedure enable preparation of a district profile just as if all students had taken all items in a long test. Matrix sampling is an efficient testing procedure when the purpose of the testing is to obtain information about the performance of groups of students.

(Continued on page VI–5)

Table 1

TESTS CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Grade	Name of Test and Content Areas	No. of Items	Matrix Sampling	No. of Forms	No. of Items/ Form	Skills Tested
1	ENTRY LEVEL TEST	35	No	1	35	Immediate recall, letter recognition, auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, language development
2-3	READING TEST	250	Yes	10	25	Word identification--phonetic analysis; vocabulary; comprehension--literal and interpretive; study-locational
6	SURVEY OF BASIC SKILLS: GRADE 6	434	Yes	14	31	
	Reading	98			7	Word identification; vocabulary; comprehension--literal, interpretive, critical; study-locational
	Written Expression	112			8	Sentences--recognition and manipulation, punctuation and capitalization; word forms; language choices
	Spelling	56			4	Recognition of misspelled word in a set of words
	Mathematics	168			12	Arithmetic--number concepts, whole numbers, fractions, decimals; geometry; measurement and graphs; probability and statistics
12	SURVEY OF BASIC SKILLS: GRADE 12	478	Yes	18	33-35	
	Reading	144			8	Vocabulary; comprehension--literal, interpretive, critical; study-locational
	Written Expression	82			8-10	Sentences--recognition and manipulation, capitalization and punctuation; paragraphs, word parts; language choices
	Spelling	54			6	Recognition in context of a misspelled word
	Mathematics	198			11	Arithmetic--number concepts, whole numbers, fractions, decimals; algebra; geometry; measurement; probability and statistics

from San Marino Unified School District

5 EXAMPLE OF Detailed Explanation of the Nature of the Test

The Matrix Sampling Reading Test was administered for the second time in 1974-75 to second and third grade children in California. This test consists of a large number of items which are broken down into short tests. Each child does only a short portion of the total battery, so that only two (2) or three (3) children in any given class are presented with the same items. These items are multiple choice, as machine-scorable questions are required.

The test was changed slightly from the previous year; some items were made harder, and some were made less difficult. The changes were made as the result of a teacher questionnaire, which was given to each teacher who administered the test.

The largest number of items were on READING COMPREHENSION; second in number of items were WORD IDENTIFICATION AND VOCABULARY; and the smallest number of items were STUDY-LOCATIONAL SKILLS (such things as dictionary and library usage.)

This test is reported to us as a profile of test results in comparison with statewide norms. Individual children are not identified, so the test cannot be used to measure individual growth or achievement.

from Winters Joint Unified School District

6 EXAMPLE OF
Explanation of Test Contents

READING PERFORMANCE, WRITTEN EXPRESSION AND SPELLING PERFORMANCE, AND MATHEMATICS PERFORMANCE, BY SKILL AREA, OF CABRILLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS, 1974-75

Skill area	Description of skills assessed	State Percentile Rank of Score Band Cabrillo Unified Grade 6	Illustrative test question
WORD IDENTIFICATION	(Total and average for word identification skill areas)	89-94	
	The pupil must identify the correct sounds of vowels, consonants, and vowel combinations.		Which word has a sound in it like the sound of the letters underlined in through? The sound is not always made by the same letters. o rough o blew o bought o touch o draw
	The pupil must identify how prefixes change the meaning of a root word.		The ending of the word biggest makes the word mean: o less big o bigger than o as big as o not so big o most big
VOCABULARY	The pupil must select the meaning of a word as it is used in a paragraph.	69-81	In this story the word principal means the same as: o law o main o headmaster o money
COMPREHENSION	(Total and average for comprehension skill areas)	69-78	
Literal	After reading a passage, the pupil must identify elements in the material read which have been explicitly stated.	65-78	In the letter to her parents, Carol said that the highway was: o smooth o bumpy o forested o hilly

NOTE: This district reported its district comparison score band in the third column.

from Cabrillo Unified School District

- **Summary of Results and Interpretation**

The results are outlined by subject and grade in the summary portion of the governing board's report. Attention is drawn to significant increases or decreases and to strong and weak areas. Results are analyzed in relation to comparison score bands. Unusual findings are reported. Some examples are presented here of the ways in which certain districts summarized the test results and presented interpretations of the results.

1 EXAMPLE OF A Brief Summary of Results for One Grade

For the past few years, reading achievement in California schools has been slightly below national norms at both the sixth and twelfth grades; however, state testing results statewide at the sixth-grade level show an upward trend and are now only slightly below national norms. With this in mind it is apparent that our sixth graders are well above national norms in reading. In the area of written expression, statewide performance is below national norms. Therefore, though our scores at the sixth grade are high compared to state norms, on a national basis they would not be as encouraging.

A review of the sixth-grade mathematics scores indicates a relatively high level of competency in the basic areas of arithmetic. Over the past several years mathematics scores have been down nationwide. It appears they have now stabilized, and increases are anticipated in the future.

from Cabrillo Unified School District

2 EXAMPLE OF Detailed Outline of Results, Including School Rankings and Areas Above Norms

1. Across the district, reading and science appear to be the areas of greatest general strength, and language and mathematics appear to be the areas of greatest general weakness.

2. Performance at the ninth grade level exceeds that of the publisher's reference group for each of the content areas. However, this general ninth grade strength begins to diminish at the tenth grade level with varying degrees of severity; and at the twelfth grade level, performance falls below that of the publisher's reference group in language, mathematics, reference skills, and social studies. Within the area of reading, comprehension skills tend to diminish at a greater rate than vocabulary skills, and in mathematics, computational skills diminish more severely than concepts and applications.

3. The individual schools show a variety of strengths and weaknesses in their profiles. The overall performance in the six skill areas can be assessed roughly by using 24 checkpoints. Each of the six skill areas has four checkpoints (one per grade level) for a total of 24 checkpoints. Using this gauge relative to the publisher's reference group, the school-by-school results show the following:

(Continued on page VI–8)

School	Checkpoints Exceeding Publisher's Reference Group Number	 %
MHS	18	75
HBHS	17	71
EHS	17	71
FVHS	16	67
WHS	8	33

4. Composite rankings across all four grade levels by content area show the following relationships among the schools:

Rank	Reading	Lang.	Math.	Ref. Skills	Science	Soc. Studies
1	M	HB	M	M) tie	M	M
2	HB	M	HB	E)	E	E
3	E	E	FV	HB	FV	HB
4	FV	FV	E	FV	HB	FV
5	W	W	W	W	W	W

from Huntington Beach Union High School District

3 EXAMPLE OF Testing Results Outlined in Relation to District's Overall Outlook

The 1975 CTBS results indicate that the overall student performance is consistent with the median scores of previous years. These scores do not reveal any problem areas, but it is essential to recognize that average scores overlook the extremes. This district has numerous bright students who are high achievers. Conversely, there are a number of students who are achieving below grade level. Mrs. Rieckewald, counselor at Huntington School, made a study of the 1975 CTBS results and noted that 37 (15%) 6th grade students, 72 (24%) 7th grade students, and 72 (21%) 8th grade students were more than one grade level below their actual grade placement in one or more of the three skill areas of reading, language, and mathematics. As the pressure increases to trim services for economic reasons, it is hopeful that this district does not lose sight of one of its stated goals, that is, to meet the educational needs of each student. The early identification of children with learning disabilities and the provision for diagnostic and prescriptive services are essential to the preservation of the high standards that is so characteristic of this district.

from San Marino Unified School District

4 EXAMPLE OF Relationship of District Programs and Testing

The efforts being made under Early Childhood Education (ECE) are bringing about strong gains in reading and math, which show up especially when one looks at scores of children who have been present in Winters Schools for an entire year and have been pre- and post-tested (CTBS).

The favorable results are not as apparent when data from the State Testing Program are used alone. This comes about because the state program includes all students regardless of language background, mobility, etc. District testing is administered only to those students in attendance in the fall and spring and is given in the pupil's dominant language.

(Continued on page VI–9)

Reading scores are higher statewide and Winters' pupils in the lower grades (K-5) are reflecting that trend. There continues to be improvement needed, however, in written language and spelling. This very likely could come about with renewed emphasis in these areas.

In math, Winters' pupils (K-8) show good gains as demonstrated by the test records. There seems to be increasing difficulty, however, in the area of math application at grade levels six through eight. This may be, at least in part, a reflection of the difficulty children at those levels are having with reading.

Pupils of all levels made good gains in computational skills and math concept development.

from Winters Joint Unified School District

5 EXAMPLE OF Summary of Most Significant Results

6.0 District Results

District results of California's 1974-75 statewide testing program disclosed that:

6.1 Scores at the entry level testing are at the state 28th percentile, which is to indicate that approximately 3 out of 4 school districts show higher entry level testing than does Washington Unified.

6.2 Socioeconomic indicator for the district is at the 29th percentile when compared to all California school districts; or put another way, 71% of the school districts in the state have more favorable socioeconomic factors than Washington Unified.

6.3 The percent of bilingual pupils in the district is at the 69th percentile when compared to all California school districts.

6.4 Just as school districts in California differ in student and district characteristics - socioeconomic factors, bilingual factors, etc. - and therefore differ in school performance of students, the same is true of individual schools in a district. Our district is no exception.

6.5 District scores in reading in the primary grades, 2nd and 3rd, are within the bands of expectancy.

6.6 District scores in reading at the 3rd grade level have improved over the previous year - from the state 35th percentile to the state 41st percentile.

6.7 District scores in reading, written expression, spelling, and mathematics at the 6th grade level indicate that the average scores in these areas were below expectancy. These scores were within and above the band of expectancies the previous year.

6.8 District scores in grade 12 reading, written expression, spelling, and mathematics are within the band of expectancies and the average score in mathematics was above expectancy.

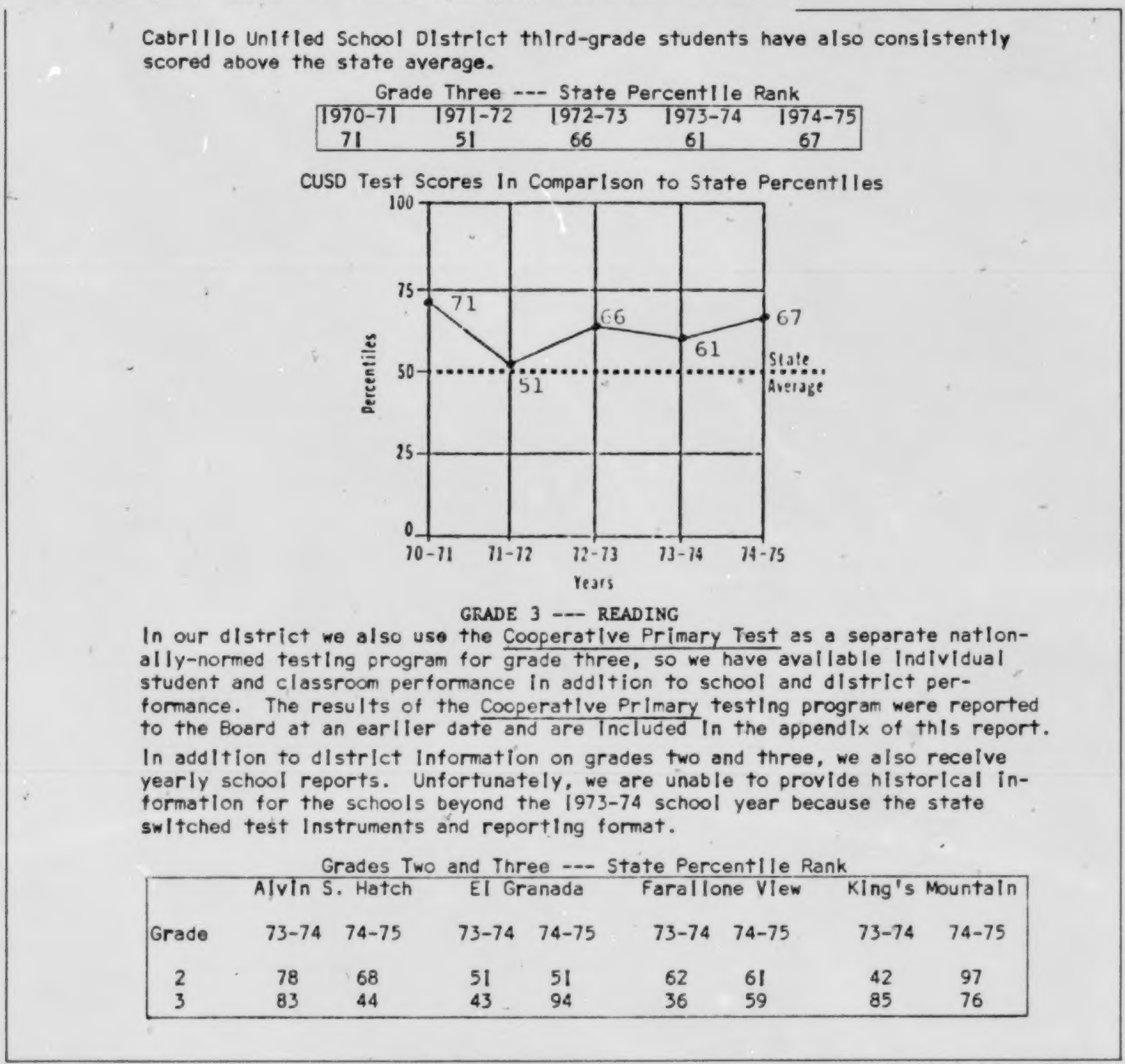
The reading and mathematics scores for grade 12 are significantly higher than those of the previous year - from the 13th to the 41st percentile in mathematics and from 9th to the 30th percentile in reading.

from Washington Unified School District

• Detailed Results

All significant results are given, both in percentiles and percent correct, in the portion of the board report in which detailed results are presented. Where useful, scores are broken down by grade levels, subjects, and schools. Previous years' results are compared with the current ones, with graphic techniques used where necessary to draw trends. Comparison score bands are shown. Statewide results are outlined. When necessary, terms are defined and explained. Some examples of the ways in which certain school districts presented detailed results in their reports to their governing boards follow.

1 EXAMPLE OF
Small Graphs for Each Grade, with Explanatory Text and School Scores



Cabrillo Unified School District third-grade students have also consistently scored above the state average.

Grade Three --- State Percentile Rank

1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
71	51	66	61	67

CUSD Test Scores In Comparison to State Percentiles

100
75
50
25
0
Percentiles
71
51
66
61
67
State Average
70-71
71-72
72-73
73-74
74-75
Years

GRADE 3 --- READING

In our district we also use the Cooperative Primary Test as a separate nationally-normed testing program for grade three, so we have available individual student and classroom performance in addition to school and district performance. The results of the Cooperative Primary testing program were reported to the Board at an earlier date and are included in the appendix of this report.

In addition to district information on grades two and three, we also receive yearly school reports. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide historical information for the schools beyond the 1973-74 school year because the state switched test instruments and reporting format.

Grades Two and Three --- State Percentile Rank

	Alvin S. Hatch		El Granada		Farallone View		King's Mountain	
Grade	73-74	74-75	73-74	74-75	73-74	74-75	73-74	74-75
2	78	68	51	51	62	61	42	97
3	83	44	43	94	36	59	85	76

from Cabrillo Unified School District

2 EXAMPLE OF
Scores for Each Subject and Corresponding Comparison Score Band

SURVEY COMPARISONS

Content Areas	State Percentile Rank of		Index	Positions of Actual Score (X) and Comparison Score Band (000) on the State Percentile Rank Scale 1 25 50 75 99
	Actual Score	Comparison Score Band		
Reading	11	11-44	W	X000000000000
Written Expression	30	13-39	W	00000000X000
Spelling	26	11-47	W	000000X0000000
Mathematics	22	9-39	W	000000X000000

This section provides comparative data based on the test scores and the background factors for Winters. Reported are the percentile rank of the actual "Percent Correct" score, the percentile rank of the comparison score band, the "Interpretation Index," and a graphic representation of the percentile scores.

State Percentile Rank of the Actual Score:	This indicates how Winters High School's actual "Percent Correct" score ranks among all other schools in California. The school which is at the median has a percentile rank of 50. As an example, our school district ranks above 11 percent of the districts in the state in the content area of reading.
State Percentile Rank of the Comparison Score Band:	The comparison score band indicates the middle 50 percent of the entire range of percentile ranks which have been obtained by schools with characteristics similar to Winters. The computation of the comparison score band involved consideration of the background characteristics of the students and the special circumstances of the school. The comparison score band enables us to compare the scores of Winters with those of schools that have similar background characteristics. (See next section for discussion of background factors. The comparison score band, indicating typical performance of districts like Winters, ranges from the 11th to the 44th percentile.
Interpretation Index:	This is an indication of the position of Winters' percentile rank in relation to the comparison score band. On the average, 25 percent of state schools will fall above (A), 50 percent fall within (W), and 25 percent below (B) the comparison score band. Winters' scores all fall within (W) the band.

from Winters Joint Unified School District

3 EXAMPLE OF Brief Text Explaining Results

READING TEST, MAY, 1975
GRADES 2-3

CALIFORNIA ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

In May, 1974, Winters second grade pupils answered 59.3 percent of questions correctly on the Reading Test. In 1975, the second grade pupils answered 62.0 percent of the questions correctly.

In 1974, Winters second grade students scored at the 21st percentile rank, as compared with scores statewide, and in 1975, at the 27th percentile rank, as compared with second graders statewide.

In 1974, Winters third grade students answered 75.4 percent of the questions correctly on the Reading Test, and in 1975 the MEAN SCORE was 76.5 percent correct. Because of the increase in reading scores at the third grade level statewide, the Winters' percentile rank shifted from the 24th percentile to the 21st percentile, when compared with third grade pupils statewide.

Both of these scores are well within the expectancy bands for districts like Winters. It should be noted that the drop at the third grade level from the 24th to the 21st percentile does not signify an actual drop in reading test scores. Winters' pupils actually made a gain of from 75.4 percent correct to 76.5 percent correct on the test.

Administrators throughout the state are very pleased that third grade reading scores in California are now above the NATIONAL NORMS for the first time in many years.

from Winters Joint Unified School District

4 EXAMPLE OF Typewritten Page of Results and Previous Scores

Achievement Factors		State Percentile Rank			Performance Index*		
Grade	Subject	1972-3	1973-4	1974-5	1972-3	1973-4	1974-5
2	Reading	33	28	26	W	W	W
3	Reading	45	35	41	A	A	W
6	Reading	46	28	19	A	W	B
6	Written Expression	35	22	17	W	W	B
6	Spelling	38	22	19	W	W	B
6	Mathematics	49	37	20	A	A	B
12	Reading	10	9	30	B	B	W
12	Written Expression	32	21	19	W	W	W
12	Spelling	48	31	29	A	W	W
12	Mathematics	66	13	41	A	W	A

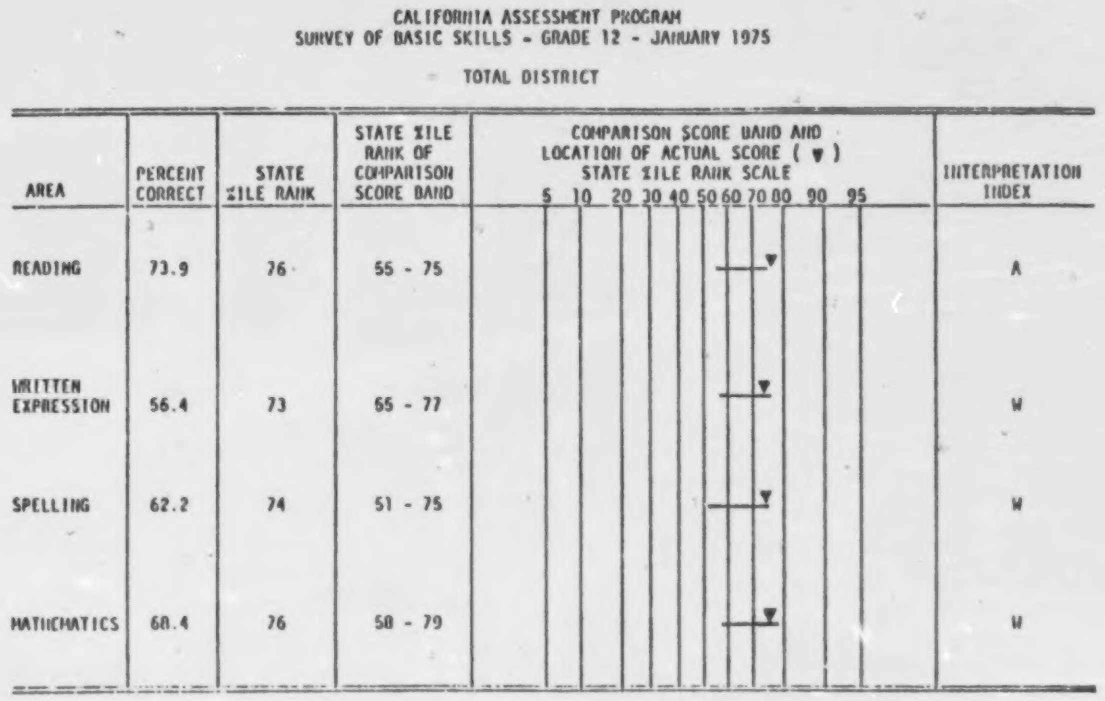
(Continued on page VI–13)

Background Factors	District Value 1972-3	District Value 1973-4	District Value 1974-5	State Percentile Rank 1972-3	State Percentile Rank 1973-4	State Percentile Rank 1974-5
Entry Level Tests	-	28.4	26.6	-	33	28
Percent Minority Pupils	-	27.3	27.3	-	70	70
Average Class Size (K-8)	26.4	27.5	27.6	50	64	67
Average Class Size (9-12)	24.1	23.2	25.2	36	29	45
Socio-Econ Index (Entry)	-	1.80	1.87	-	25	29
Socio-Econ Index (Gr. 3)	-	-	1.01	-	-	39
Socio-Econ Index (Gr. 6)	-	-	1.12	-	-	33
Exp-Instruct (Per ADA)	$689	-	$790	62	-	60
Parent Educ Index (Gr. 3)	-	-	1.71	-	-	25
Parent Educ Index (Gr. 6)	-	-	1.68	-	-	10

* B - Below Expectancy
W - Within Expectancy
A - Above Expectancy

from Washington Unified School District

5 EXAMPLE OF Local Chart Giving Important Details of State Printout



CALIFORNIA ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
SURVEY OF BASIC SKILLS - GRADE 12 - JANUARY 1975

TOTAL DISTRICT

AREA	PERCENT CORRECT	STATE %ILE RANK	STATE %ILE RANK OF COMPARISON SCORE BAND	COMPARISON SCORE BAND AND LOCATION OF ACTUAL SCORE (▼) STATE %ILE RANK SCALE	INTERPRETATION INDEX
READING	73.9	76	55 - 75		A
WRITTEN EXPRESSION	56.4	73	65 - 77		W
SPELLING	62.2	74	51 - 75		W
MATHEMATICS	68.4	76	58 - 79		W

from Huntington Beach Union High School District

6 EXAMPLE OF
District Use of Pre- and Post-test Scores to Show Gains in Grade Equivalent Scores

COMPREHENSIVE TEST OF BASIC SKILLS

1974-75

READING TEST

GRADE I
(7 months instruction)

PRE-TEST- OCTOBER, 1974	POST-TEST - MAY, 1975	AVERAGE MONTHS GAIN
N = 45		
MEAN GRADE EQUIVALENT = 0.52	MEAN GRADE EQUIVALENT = 1.90	13.8 Months Gain

GRADE II
(7 months instruction)

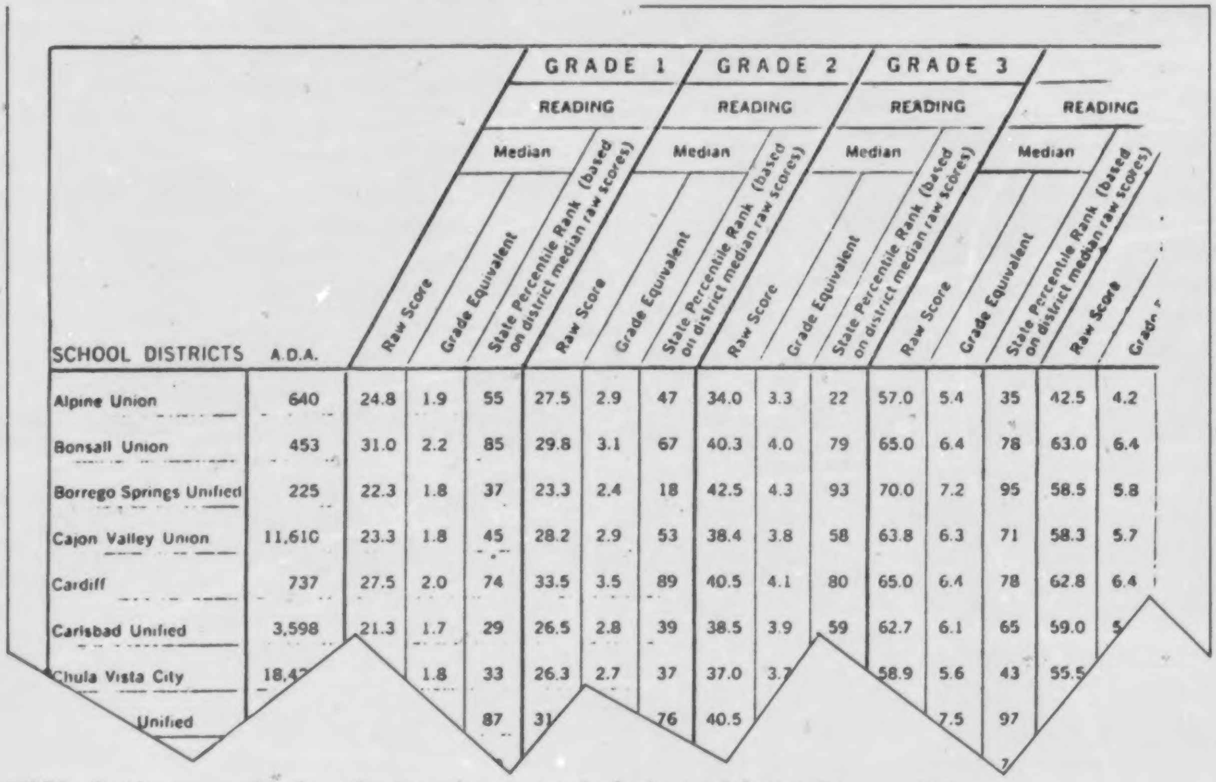
PRE-TEST - OCTOBER, 1974	POST-TEST - MAY, 1975	AVERAGE MONTHS GAIN
N = 36		
MEAN GRADE EQUIVALENT = 1.96	MEAN GRADE EQUIVALENT = 3.37	14.0 Months Gain

GRADE III
(7 months instruction)

PRE-TEST - OCTOBER, 1974	POST-TEST - MAY, 1975	AVERAGE MONTHS GAIN
N = 53		
MEAN GRADE EQUIVALENT = 2.70	MEAN GRADE EQUIVALENT = 3.53	8.4 Months Gain

from Winters Joint Unified School District

7 EXAMPLE OF Chart Used to Report Data for All Schools in County

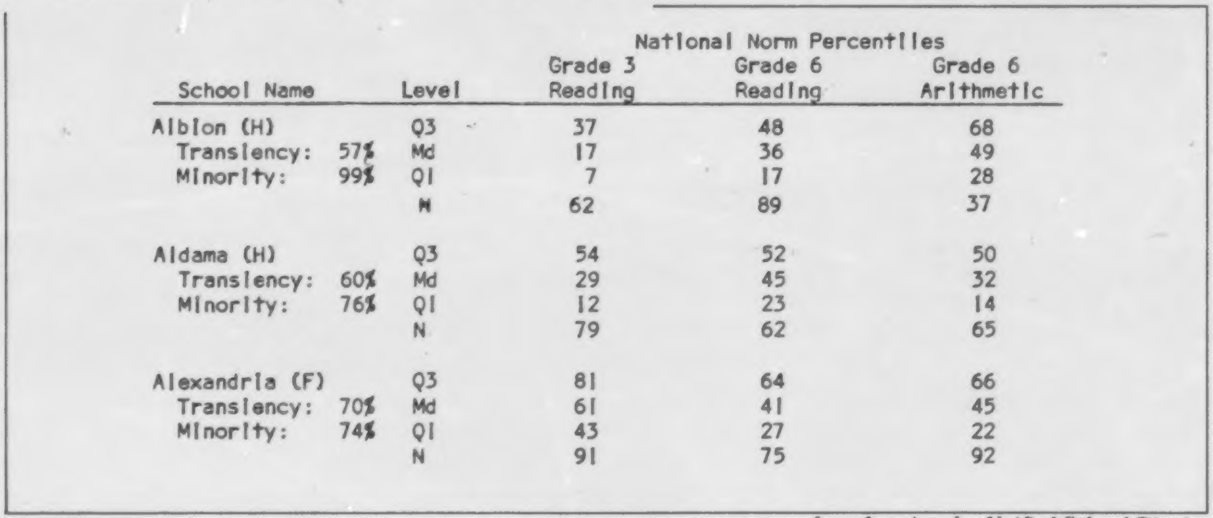


		GRADE 1			GRADE 2			GRADE 3						
		READING			READING			READING			READING			
		Median			Median			Median			Median			
SCHOOL DISTRICTS	A.D.A.	Raw Score	Grade Equivalent	State Percentile Rank (based on district median raw scores)	Raw Score	Grade Equivalent	State Percentile Rank (based on district median raw scores)	Raw Score	Grade Equivalent	State Percentile Rank (based on district median raw scores)	Raw Score	Grade Equivalent	State Percentile Rank (based on district median raw scores)	Raw Score	Grade
Alpine Union	640	24.8	1.9	55	27.5	2.9	47	34.0	3.3	22	57.0	5.4	35	42.5	4.2
Bonsall Union	453	31.0	2.2	85	29.8	3.1	67	40.3	4.0	79	65.0	6.4	78	63.0	6.4
Borrego Springs Unified	225	22.3	1.8	37	23.3	2.4	18	42.5	4.3	93	70.0	7.2	95	58.5	5.8
Cajon Valley Union	11,610	23.3	1.8	45	28.2	2.9	53	38.4	3.8	58	63.8	6.3	71	58.3	5.7
Cardiff	737	27.5	2.0	74	33.5	3.5	89	40.5	4.1	80	65.0	6.4	78	62.8	6.4
Carlsbad Unified	3,598	21.3	1.7	29	26.5	2.8	39	38.5	3.9	59	62.7	6.1	65	59.0	5
Chula Vista City	18,4		1.8	33	26.3	2.7	37	37.0	3.		58.9	5.6	43	55.5	
Unified				87	31		76	40.5				7.5	97		
													7		

NOTE: Besides scores, the chart also is used to report the background factors shown on state printout.

from Office of San Diego County Superintendent of Schools

8 EXAMPLE OF Large District Report Showing Scores for Each School



		National Norm Percentiles		
School Name	Level	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 6 Reading	Grade 6 Arithmetic
Albion (H)	Q3	37	48	68
Transiency: 57%	Md	17	36	49
Minority: 99%	Q1	7	17	28
	N	62	89	37
Aldama (H)	Q3	54	52	50
Transiency: 60%	Md	29	45	32
Minority: 76%	Q1	12	23	14
	N	79	62	65
Alexandria (F)	Q3	81	64	66
Transiency: 70%	Md	61	41	45
Minority: 74%	Q1	43	27	22
	N	91	75	92

from Los Angeles Unified School District

9 EXAMPLE OF
Chart Showing Percent of Pupils That Scored at or Above Norm

PERCENT OF PUPILS WHO ATTAINED OR EXCEEDED GRADE NORM

Area	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 6 Reading	Grade 6 Arithmetic	Grade 8 Reading	Grade 8 Arithmetic
District	44	45	45	43	47
A	44	45	46	43	50
B	27	25	26	21	29
C	27	25	21	19	22
D	59	62	60	54	56
E	35	35	35	32	37
F	42	39	36	25	32
G	28	26	30	18	24

from Los Angeles Unified School District

• Background Factors and Other Testing Data

District background factors are often explained in the fourth part of the report to the board. Changes from previous years are noted. Results of other district testing are reported, and comparisons are made with results from state testing. Other statistics that may bear on pupil achievement are reported, including survey data. Attention is drawn to factors not otherwise noted that may affect test results. Examples of background factors and other testing data for the report to the governing board are presented below and on the pages that follow.

1 EXAMPLE OF
Background Factors Reported and Explained

BACKGROUND FACTORS SUMMARY

Background Factors	Value for Median District in State	District Value	State Percent Value	Position of Each Background Factor on the State Percentile Rank Goals			
				1	25	50	75 99
Grade 6 Ach. Index	67.7	64.3	27		X		
Socioeconomic Index	1.30	0.90	11	X			
Parent Education Index	2.00	1.70	12	X			

The background factor summary is based in part on the data from the School Information Form that accompanied the Survey of Basic Skills: Grade 12. Each school principal was asked to estimate and record in the School Information Form the percentages of students classified in various categories. These data have been aggregated for all California schools, and the data are presented for the median school (the median school for each factor) and for Winters High School. (The background factor data were also used to compute the comparison score band shown in the previous section of this report. Some background factors, such as mobility and percent Spanish surname, are not included in this report because they did not significantly affect the accuracy of the comparison score band.) The percentile rank of Winters High School in comparison with all other California schools is shown in the column "State Percentile Rank." The following are explanations of the background factors that were assessed:

Grade Six Achievement Index: This index is a composite of the grade six scores on two subtests of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills achieved in October, 1973, by the pupils that feed into the high school. The subtest scores that were combined were from the reading and mathematics subtests. As indicated, the index value is less than the state median reflecting that the students entering Winters High School have a lower achievement level.

Socioeconomic Index: Principals estimated on the School Information Form that the percentages of students whose parents were engaged in each of the following occupational categories: (1) unskilled employees (and welfare); (2) skilled and semiskilled employees; (3) semiprofessionals, clerical and sales workers, and technicians; and (4) executives, professionals, and managers.

To convert the percentage figures into index form, the occupational categories were assigned values from 0 (unskilled) through 3 (executives). The Winters High School value would indicate that the students come from an area which has a relatively large proportion of skilled through unskilled employees.

(Continued on page VI–18)

Parent Education Index: Principals estimated on the School Information Form the percentages of students whose parents had attained each of the following educational levels:

Not a high school graduate
High school graduate
College graduate/advanced degree

To convert the percentage figures into index form, the educational levels were assigned values from 1 (not a high school graduate) through 3 (college graduate). The Winters High School value, less than the state median, would indicate that the students do not come from an area with a relatively large proportion of high school/college graduates.

As examples of the above, the Winters' grade six achievement index is higher than that of 27 percent of all other districts in California; the socioeconomic index is higher than that of 11 percent of all other districts in California; and the parent education index is higher than that of 12 percent of all other districts in California.

from Winters Joint Unified School District

2 EXAMPLE OF Discussion of Background Factors

Factors Used by the State Department of Education. In connection with the California Assessment Program (state-mandated testing), the State Department of Education included three factors in computing comparison score bands for reporting state test results. These three factors were as follows: grade six achievement, socioeconomic status, and parent education level. The sixth grade achievement index was based upon the 1973 state test data for feeder schools, and the socioeconomic and parent education indices were based upon principals' estimates. Summary data regarding these three demographic factors are presented in Table G-1. The following observations may be made from these data:

1. Grade six achievement data (for feeder schools) show that HBHS and EHS are somewhat above the other schools in terms of this student background factor. WHS shows the lowest feeder school sixth grade achievement index.

2. Principals' estimates of socioeconomic status show EHS with the highest socioeconomic level followed by MHS. WHS shows the lowest estimate of socioeconomic level in the district.

3. Principals' estimates of the levels of parent education are similar across all schools with FVHS showing the highest level and EHS and HBHS showing the lowest levels.

Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Another factor frequently used to estimate the socioeconomic status of a school population is the percentage of students in families receiving financial assistance under the program of aid to families with dependent children (AFDC). Summary data regarding this factor are summarized below:

(Continued on page VI–19)

School	AFDC Count Number of Students	Percent of School Population
EHS	73	2.0
FVHS	55	1.3
HBHS	134	4.4
MHS	54	1.5
WHS	197	5.6
DISTRICT	513	2.9

These data show that WHS and HBHS have the highest percentages of their populations receiving assistance under AFDC. MHS and FVHS show the lowest percentages.

Ethnic Distributions. Data regarding minority group distributions are frequently useful in describing school populations, as this factor may point to language barriers that affect student performance. Table G-2 presents data regarding the concentrations of minority groups in the district. These data indicate the following:

1. Spanish-surnamed Americans represent the largest single minority group in the district followed by Asian Americans and American Indians.
2. The greatest concentration of minority students is at WHS where 18.8 percent of the student population is composed of minority group students.

Attendance Data. One final set of data included in this general information section relates to student attendance patterns. Attendance data were collected during the 1974-75 school year for random samples of approximately 100 students per grade level per school. These data are presented in summary form in Tables G-3 and G-4. The following observations may be made from these data:

1. Across the district, ninth grade students show the highest rate of attendance followed by tenth and twelfth grade students. The lowest attendance rate was shown by eleventh grade students (Table G-3). The median number of days absent increased by nearly one day from the ninth to the tenth grade, by more than two days from the tenth to the eleventh grade, and dropped by almost one-half day from the eleventh to the twelfth grade.
2. Table G-3 shows a variety of patterns among the schools in terms of the median number of days absent by grade level. Overall, WHS tends to show the highest rates of attendance, and FVHS shows the lowest rates of attendance.
3. Table G-4 indicates that attendance is generally highest during the first quarter, decreases during the second quarter, remains about the same during the third quarter, and reaches its low point during the fourth quarter. Individual schools show variations in this pattern, with EHS showing a dramatic increase in the rate of attendance during the fourth quarter. This increase appears to be the result of a concerted effort on the part of the staff to improve attendance.

Summary. The data presented in this section show that there are differences in the student populations among the five comprehensive high schools. These differences are subtle in some cases and dramatic in others, and while the true effect of these factors on student performance is not totally clear, all of these factors taken together would suggest that WHS would show the lowest levels of student performance generally. The differences among the remaining four schools across all factors are not definitive enough to make further predictions.

from Huntington Beach Union High School District

Student Survey

The matrix-sampling testing completed on a districtwide basis in May of 1975 included a student survey which dealt with student perceptions of their school programs and various aspects of school in general. These data are presented in summary form by grade level by school and for the district in Tables SS-1, SS-2, SS-3, SS-4, SS-5, and SS-6 contained in the appendix to this report. The following observations may be made from these data:

1. A majority of the students view their programs as preparation for college or both college preparation and vocational.
2. Approximately one-fifth of the students anticipate early graduation.
3. A majority of the students plan some form of higher education immediately following high school graduation, and a large majority plan advanced education during their lifetimes.
4. Approximately three-fifths of the students indicated plans to enter professional-managerial or technical vocations.
5. The number, variety, and quality of courses available received generally favorable ratings from the students.
6. The variety of learning activities and quality of teaching were given good to excellent ratings by a majority of the students.
7. Approximately one-half of the students rated the availability and quality of counseling and guidance services as good to excellent, and approximately 30 percent rated these services as fair to poor.
8. Extra-curricular activities received generally favorable ratings, with the athletic program receiving the highest ratings and student government receiving the lowest ratings.
9. Approximately 40 percent of the students rated the number and type of student rules and regulations as good to excellent, and approximately 25 percent rated them as fair to poor.
10. The quality of facilties was rated good to excellent by approximately one-half of the students.
11. More than 40 percent of the students rated scheduling and registration procedures as fair to poor.
12. Slightly fewer than one-half of the students rated daily schedules as good to excellent.
13. Grading policies were rated good to excellent by more than 40 percent of the students and fair to poor by approximately 25 percent of the students.
14. Interpersonal relationships (student-staff and student-student) were rated good to excellent by approximately one-half of the students, with student-administration relationships receiving the lowest ratings.
15. Slightly fewer than one-half of the students rated their elementary school preparation for high school as good to excellent, and more than one-half of the students rated their high school experience in general as good to excellent.

(Continued on page VI–21)

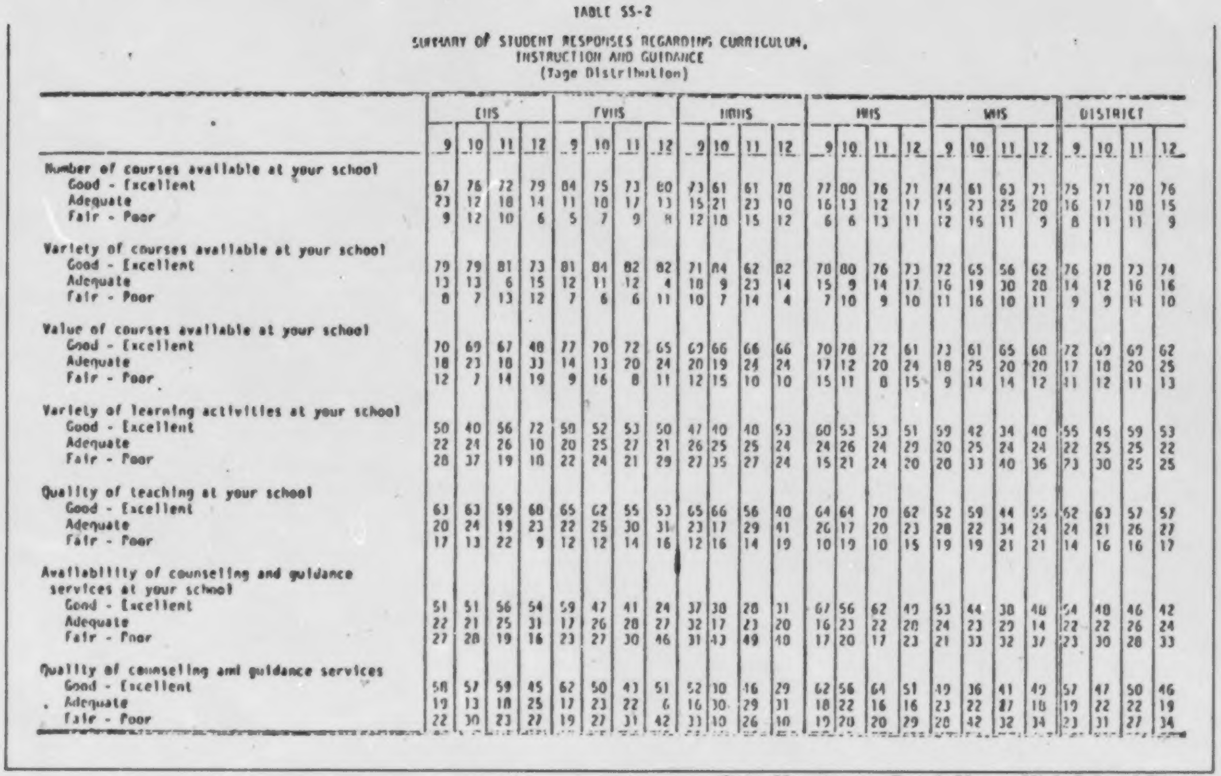


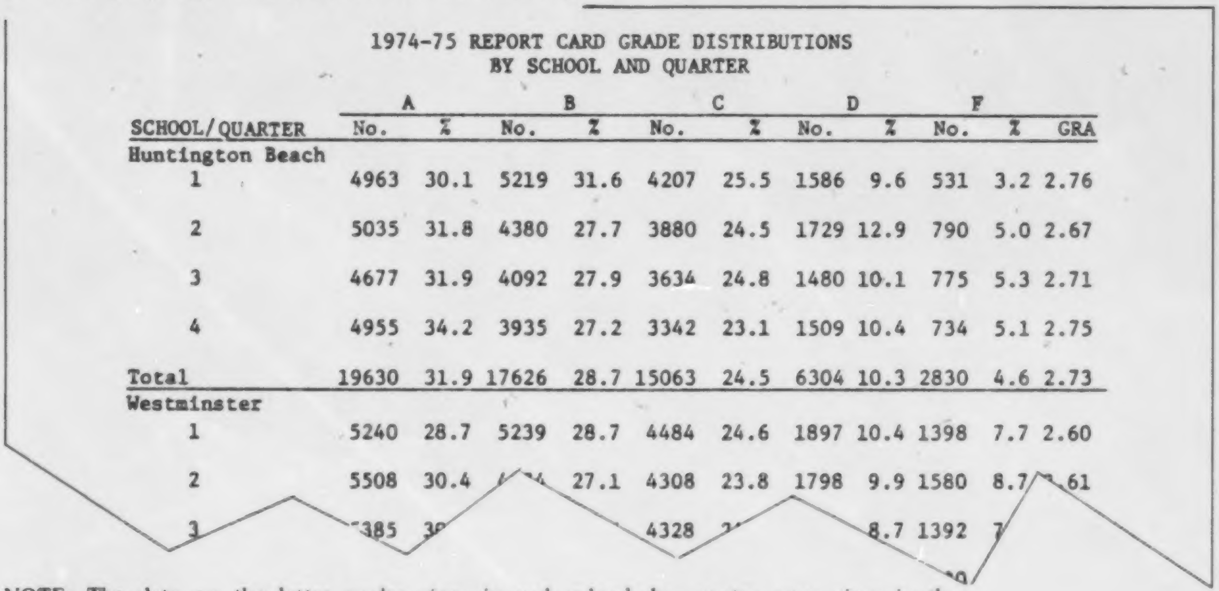
TABLE SS-2

SUMMARY OF STUDENT RESPONSES REGARDING CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND GUIDANCE
(%age Distribution)

	EHS				FVHS				HBHS				HHS				WHS				DISTRICT			
	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12
Number of courses available at your school																								
Good - Excellent	67	76	72	79	84	75	73	80	73	61	61	78	77	80	76	71	74	61	63	71	75	71	70	76
Adequate	23	12	18	14	11	18	17	13	15	21	23	10	16	13	12	17	15	23	25	20	16	17	18	15
Fair - Poor	9	12	10	6	5	7	9	8	12	18	15	12	6	6	13	11	12	16	11	9	8	11	11	9
Variety of courses available at your school																								
Good - Excellent	79	79	81	73	81	84	82	82	71	84	62	82	78	80	76	73	72	65	56	62	76	78	73	74
Adequate	13	13	6	15	12	11	12	4	18	9	23	14	15	9	14	17	16	19	30	28	14	12	16	16
Fair - Poor	8	7	13	12	7	6	6	11	10	7	14	4	7	10	9	10	11	16	10	11	9	9	11	10
Value of courses available at your school																								
Good - Excellent	70	69	67	48	77	70	72	65	69	66	66	66	70	78	72	61	73	61	65	68	72	69	69	62
Adequate	18	23	18	33	14	13	20	24	20	19	24	24	17	12	20	24	18	25	20	20	17	18	20	25
Fair - Poor	12	7	14	19	9	16	8	11	12	15	10	10	15	11	8	15	9	14	14	12	11	12	11	13
Variety of learning activities at your school																								
Good - Excellent	50	40	56	72	58	52	53	50	47	40	48	53	60	53	53	51	59	42	34	40	55	45	59	53
Adequate	22	24	26	10	20	25	27	21	26	25	25	24	24	26	24	29	20	25	24	24	22	25	25	22
Fair - Poor	28	37	19	18	22	24	21	29	27	35	27	24	15	21	24	20	20	33	40	36	23	30	25	25
Quality of teaching at your school																								
Good - Excellent	63	63	59	68	65	62	55	53	65	66	56	40	64	64	70	62	52	59	44	55	62	63	57	57
Adequate	20	24	19	23	22	25	30	31	23	17	29	41	26	17	20	23	28	22	34	24	24	21	26	27
Fair - Poor	17	13	22	9	12	12	14	16	12	16	14	19	10	19	10	15	19	19	21	21	14	16	16	17
Availability of counseling and guidance services at your school																								
Good - Excellent	51	51	56	54	59	47	41	24	37	38	28	31	67	56	62	49	53	44	38	48	54	48	46	42
Adequate	22	21	25	31	17	26	28	27	32	17	23	20	16	23	22	28	24	23	29	14	22	22	26	24
Fair - Poor	27	28	19	16	23	27	30	46	31	43	49	48	17	20	17	23	21	33	32	37	23	30	28	33
Quality of counseling and guidance services																								
Good - Excellent	58	57	59	45	62	50	43	51	52	30	46	29	62	56	64	51	49	36	41	49	57	47	50	46
Adequate	19	13	18	25	17	23	22	6	16	30	29	31	18	22	16	16	23	22	27	18	19	22	22	19
Fair - Poor	22	30	23	27	19	27	31	42	33	40	26	40	19	20	20	29	28	42	32	34	23	31	27	34

from Huntington Beach Union High School District

4 EXAMPLE OF
School-by-School Distribution of Letter Grades



1974-75 REPORT CARD GRADE DISTRIBUTIONS
BY SCHOOL AND QUARTER

	A		B		C		D		F		
SCHOOL/QUARTER	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	GRA
Huntington Beach											
1	4963	30.1	5219	31.6	4207	25.5	1586	9.6	531	3.2	2.76
2	5035	31.8	4380	27.7	3880	24.5	1729	12.9	790	5.0	2.67
3	4677	31.9	4092	27.9	3634	24.8	1480	10.1	775	5.3	2.71
4	4955	34.2	3935	27.2	3342	23.1	1509	10.4	734	5.1	2.75
Total	19630	31.9	17626	28.7	15063	24.5	6304	10.3	2830	4.6	2.73
Westminster											
1	5240	28.7	5239	28.7	4484	24.6	1897	10.4	1398	7.7	2.60
2	5508	30.4	[illegible]	27.1	4308	23.8	1798	9.9	1580	8.7	.61
3	385	3			4328			8.7	1392	7	

NOTE: The data on the letter grades given in each school, by quarter, were given in the Huntington Beach report so that its governing board could compare this information with the state test results for the district.

from Huntington Beach Union High School District

5 EXAMPLE OF
Explanation of Limitations of Test Results

Evaluation of a school district's educational program implies more than measurement. Evaluation implies looking at measurement in the light of objectives and goals and making decisions about the value of the outcomes obtained. The goals of education are complex, and standardized tests are available to measure only a few of those goals. Standardized test scores should not be the only criteria used to evaluate a total educational program; but to the extent that the tests measure objectives of the program, the test scores represent valid measures for those objectives and are meaningful indicators of achievement.

The chief limitation of most testing programs is that they present and analyze average student achievement in a limited number of cognitive content areas. For example, the tests both in the state assessment program and the district testing program measure achievement only in the areas of reading, written expression, spelling, and mathematics. Many other subject areas such as history, geography, science, and social science are not included. Neither are such areas as art, music, career education, or any noncognitive characteristics e.g., self-esteem, citizenship, or cultural appreciation). Therefore, the reader must realize that only some of the information that is required for the evaluation process is provided in this report. Perhaps of greatest value are the teacher-made tests which are criterion-referenced and have the added strength of assessing realistically the individual needs of students.

from San Marino Unified School District

- **Recommendations**

In the recommendations section of the testing report, certain conclusions are presented to the members of the school district governing board. In addition, recommendations are made for program emphasis and for further testing or analyses. The following example from the Huntington Beach Union High School District report illustrates how one California school district presented its recommendations.

EXAMPLE

Discussion and Conclusions

As was stated earlier, this report represents an initial effort to integrate various data sets into a comprehensive program assessment, and as such it should be viewed in a baseline sense rather than as the answer to all questions. As readers from various audiences study and use this report, additional data sets may be identified for consideration in future reports.

In reviewing the data presented in this report in their totality, it would seem that the overall district performance in reading, language, and mathematics is highly satisfactory relative to the remainder of the state. Reading is the area of greatest strength as shown by both the statewide and districtwide testing programs. The districtwide test data indicate that performance in the areas of language and mathematics tends to weaken at the upper grade levels in a relative sense. Performance in the area of science appears to be satisfactory as is the case with social studies. Social studies performance does, however, weaken at the 12th grade level. Performance in reference skills is similar to that in language and mathematics, weakening at the upper grade levels.

In a relative sense ninth grade performance in the basic skills is the strongest, and there is a general pattern of weakening as students progress through their high school programs. This pattern would suggest that while there is continual growth in each of the basic skill areas assessed, the growth is not commensurate with the potential. The pattern would suggest diminishing emphasis on basic skills in the upper grade levels. However, it should be noted that the source of this apparent diminishing emphasis is not known. It could be an artifact of the curriculum, student selection of courses, graduation requirements, instruction, a combination of these factors, and/or still other factors.

The data contained in this report would suggest that the district has a relatively strong academic orientation. This is supported by the contrast of physical performance test results as opposed to the academic testing and student perceptions from the TRACE data and student survey data. There are also indications that this academic orientation is commensurate with general student desires. However, there would appear to be a substantial number of students who are not finding their needs met satisfactorily. This possible discrepancy could be the result of several factors similar to those noted in the above paragraph. Another factor worthy of further exploration in this regard is that of the guidance services available to students.

Student perceptions identified some areas of dissatisfaction relative to the school operation and program. Areas such as grading policies, daily schedules, scheduling and registration procedures, and rules and regulations were not highly rated by students. Guidance services came under

(Continued on page VI–24)

criticism from students in a variety of areas. Some of these matters may be artifacts of the large schools and overcrowded conditions, but nonetheless cannot be overlooked.

Substantial data were presented regarding the individual schools, and these data show that no one school reigns supreme in all areas. HBHS and MHS tend to show the highest levels of academic performance, with EHS sharing this position in several areas. WHS tends to be consistently at the bottom of the school-by-school rankings, which might be expected in terms of the difference in demographic factors. However, in a relative sense WHS appears to have a highly satisfactory program.

Considering the fact that some of the data and the integrated approach used in this report are on a first-time basis, it would be this evaluator's opinion that across the district the educational program is generally satisfactory, with no glaring discrepancies. There are matters for concern in the basic skill profiles which, if verified by a second year of data, could be matters of more serious concern. There are also matters for concern regarding some services; namely, guidance services. Specific concerns become apparent for the individual schools, and they vary from school to school.

Recommendations

Based upon the data provided in this report and the evaluator's observations in conducting this program assessment, the following recommendations are offered:

1. This report is a first time effort at comprehensive data integration and, as such, should be used for baseline and status purposes in reviewing and examining the program. This report should not be used as a basis for overreaction at any level.

2. The pattern of apparent weakened performance at the upper grade levels (relative to the ninth grade) should be reviewed for possible explanations. The performance in language and mathematics skill areas should receive particular attention.

3. The guidance program should be reviewed in an effort to improve its effectiveness and/or the perceptions of its effectiveness.

4. The matter of general program orientation versus student needs and desires should receive further attention to clarify the existence of a possible discrepancy. This issue has several ramifications to be considered.

5. Each school should carefully review the data specific to that school and attempt to determine the reasons for any apparent discrepancies.

6. The concept of comprehensive program assessment should be continued with the addition of any data set deemed necessary and a tightening of procedures in data collection and testing. The assessment program can be no better than the quality of the data obtained.

7. Specific efforts should be made to orient staff to the concept of comprehensive program assessment and to engender positive attitudes toward program assessment.

Organizing the Board Meeting

Now that we have examined the writing of the board report, let's look at the ways in which the board meeting itself might be organized. There appear to be four main ways in which this may be done.

Single Meeting

Time is set aside at a single meeting of the board for the entire presentation of results. This method assumes that all the relevant and necessary information can be presented at a single meeting and that questions and observations by board members can be accommodated at a single meeting. Most California school districts use only one board meeting for reporting results.

Follow-up Study Session

This follow-up study session works best when there is high interest in going through results in considerable detail. Two board meetings are used. The first is a regular meeting at which the testing coordinator gives the usual full report. Then a second meeting of the board is arranged; this is a public study session with only the test results on the agenda. At that second meeting, a more informal tenor is adopted so that district staff members and board members may exchange information and opinions about the results. At the study session, results are examined by grade level, content area, skill area or school, or in any other way appropriate for the district.

Four Sessions

Earl P. Owens, Consultant in the Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, recommends thinking about four carefully planned meetings. "Board members need to know more about state assessment than can be covered adequately in one board meeting," he suggests. Each of the four two-hour work sessions covers a different aspect of the test results. One plan works this way: session 1, overview and school-by-school results; session 2, reading results in depth, including skill area results and review of local school reading programs; session 3, math and language results in depth, including skill areas; and session 4, recommendations for improvements in all areas, including cost estimates.

Time for Staff Action

Results are reported in the usual way at a single regular board meeting. Then another board meeting to consider action is set for one to one and one-half months in the future. During that time, school staffs carefully review the results and, with central district staff, decide on their preferred action. They could ask for different teaching techniques, more training, new materials, or just further pupil testing. At the second board meeting, the board hears what action the district staff as a whole recommends.

Regardless of the way board meetings are organized, two other ideas will improve your reporting of results. The first is to schedule a midyear review session sometime in the early spring. At this meeting, board members are informed of actions taken since the fall testing report and of any further testing done since then.

And second, in most districts a written work plan can be the most valuable document to come out of reporting results. The plan, in simple or detailed fashion, outlines what the district expects to accomplish in the next year toward improving pupil achievement and just how it plans to go about doing it.

The Complete Board Report:
A Checklist

Here is a checklist you can use in composing your board report on testing results. The list is intended to be complete, so some items below may not be necessary in your district.

Introduction

_____ 1. Number of pupils tested, by grade level; dates of testing; pupils exempted from testing

_____ 2. Names of the tests used; the skills they measure

_____ 3. Purpose of the testing program

Summary of Results and Interpretation

_____ 4. Overall summary, by grade level and subject

_____ 5. The meaning of results, including a comparison with previous years' results and with comparison score bands

_____ 6. Apparent trends, weak areas, and strong areas

_____ 7. Highlights of the results, unusual or distinctive findings which need to be singled out

Detailed Results

_____ 8. Results by state percentile and percent correct for district, grade level, and, where desired, school (including necessary explanation and definitions)

_____ 9. Comparison scores for previous years

_____10. Comparison score bands (including necessary explanation and definitions)

_____11. Appropriate graphic treatment of scores and comparison bands (perhaps including locally created graphs and charts or copies of the state printout of results)

_____12. Explanation of matrix testing and reason scores are not reported for individual pupils

_____13. Summary of statewide results

Background Factors and Other Testing Data

_____14. Explanation and listing of background factors used in comparison score bands; district ranking in these; changes from previous years

_____15. Other district testing and comparison with California Assessment Program results

_____16. Other district statistics that have bearing on test results (such as pupil absence rate, student survey findings, and so forth)

_____17. Comments on the validity of the results, including factors not previously reported which may have effect on scores

Recommendations

_____18. Recommended steps for program changes—more testing, further study, or other use of results

Other checkpoints for your board report:

	Yes	*No*
Are charts and graphs used generously to make understanding and comparisons easy?	☐	☐
Is all of the report fully understandable to the average parent?	☐	☐
Could the report stand by itself as a document for use in the community (without your oral explanation)?	☐	☐
Are all measurement terms used in the report explained clearly and simply?	☐	☐
Will good audiovisual techniques be used at the board meeting to make the testing results available and understandable to all?	☐	☐
Are the negative results—as well as the positive—covered adequately so that no one will think that unpleasant facts are being hidden?	☐	☐

In Chapter VII . . .

- **How Test Scores Get into the Media**
- **How to Issue Your District Scores to the Media**
- **How to Issue a News Release and How to Conduct a News Conference**
- **What Facts All Media Will Need**
- **What Questions Arise About Working with the Media**

○ Reference Material

News Release Issued by the State

Outline-type Model News Release

Five Model News Releases and Information Memos

Sample Releases from the Los Angeles Unified School District

Legal Guidelines on Public Information

VII Working with the Media

> *In the past, the state administered the tests to try to provide information for a wide range of audiences: state legislators, district administrators, program planners, classroom teachers, and the general public. In trying to meet the needs of such diverse audiences, ranging from the need of teachers for very specific diagnostic information about students to the more general needs for an indication of education's attainment statewide, the testing program did none of its jobs very well.*
>
> *Feedback*[1]

On a Thursday morning each November, the Superintendent of Public Instruction delivers to the State Board of Education a report that will soon make its way into the headlines. Then the chief of the State Department of Education's Office of Program Evaluation and Research faces members of the State Board of Education and spells out for them the results of the previous year's state testing. He explains the results, suggests implications, and answers questions. In an hour the task is done. For many others, however, the task is just beginning.

Within minutes the Associated Press carries an account of the Department of Education's report to its subscribers throughout California (just about all daily newspapers, radio and television stations, but few weekly newspapers). On the afternoon of the same day and the next morning, virtually all the major news outlets in the state repeat the story for their audiences.[2]

The scores of the typical school district find their way into the press through routes other than these major news media. The big newspapers and just about all radio and TV stations concentrate on the statewide or big-city district results (which they sometimes report school by school); few devote more than a line or two, if that much, to smaller school districts.

Where the News Comes from

How, then, does the press get information on individual school district test results? Here is a summary of the three ways:

1. *From Sacramento:* As described previously, the major newspapers that cover the State Board meetings obtain district-by-district scores at the time of the November meeting. Others call the State Department of Education and ask that results for the districts in their circulation areas be mailed to them. The Department fills those requests.
2. *From offices of county superintendents of schools.* Some news media call these offices when they hear of the release of scores in Sacramento. By then the scores are public

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[1] "Purpose of the State Testing Program," *Feedback–Newsletter of the New California State Testing Program*, Vol. I (January, 1973), 1.

[2] The speed and accuracy of their reports are no accident. George W. Neill, Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction and Director, Office of Information/Program Dissemination, says: "About a week before the meeting, we release the results to the reporters who regularly cover the State Board of Education. The use of the information, of course, is embargoed until the actual board meeting. During that week the reporters have time to digest the information and sit down with us to ask questions and clarify their understanding. By the time of the actual board meeting, many of the reporters already have their story written. This arrangement works well for all of us."

News media that usually cover State Board meetings are the *Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, San Jose Mercury-News, San Diego Union, Sacramento Bee, Sacramento Union*, and the Associated Press. From Mr. Neill's office they receive four items: a news release on the statewide test results, test scores of school districts in their area, statewide test results, and the annual report of student achievement.

Mr. Neill's office also mails the statewide news release to all California news media. The release does not contain test scores for individual school districts. A sample of the release is contained in this chapter.

information, and the county superintendent must give them out.[3]

3. *From school districts.* As reported in the survey in Chapter I, most newspapers and other media get test results from the school district office. Some districts release their districtwide and school-by-school results on the day of the State Board meeting, especially in areas where major newspapers are going to run them anyway.[4] Others wait until a later time, perhaps when the scores are reported to the school board.

Thus, by knowing just when the State Board will receive the results and knowing how the news media in a particular area usually obtain their information, you can plan ahead for the most effective release of your district's results.

Four Easy Ways to Get the News Out

The next job is to communicate the information to the news media—the newspapers and radio and television stations that usually cover your area. If the district has a public information officer or a part-time consultant in public relations, no problem should occur. One should simply give that person the information and let him or her do the job. For districts without this advantage, however, four easy alternatives are available for doing the job oneself:

- *Alternative 1: Issue a News Release.* Write a news release in journalistic style that contains all the information the news media will need to report adequately your district's test results. Then either mail it to reporters or hand it to them as they attend a board meeting. (Reporters usually do a better job when they have plenty of time. Since test results are important news, it is a good idea to telephone reporters before a board meeting is held or before a news release is mailed. Reporters may even want to pick up a copy to study in advance on a hold-for-release basis.) See the resource material in this chapter for model news releases that can be adapted. A news release or information memo should be kept simple. Professional jargon should be avoided. If your next-door neighbor cannot understand the news release thoroughly, the media are not likely to either.

- *Alternative 2: Issue an Information Memo.* This alternative may be a better method for those who are not familiar with journalistic writing. The memo is simply an organized summary of all the pertinent details. It contains the same information found in a news release but is not written in paragraph form. See the resource material in this chapter for some examples. The memo can also be mailed or handed to reporters.

- *Alternative 3: Use Your Board Report.* In some cases the report you write for your school board will give reporters all the information they need. Of course, they can get a report when they attend your board meeting or, perhaps, from you ahead of time on a hold-for-use basis. Be sure, though, that the report contains all the information the reporter is likely to need. Not all school board reports do.[5]

- *Alternative 4: Hold a News Conference.* Some big-city districts use this technique because they (1) have many newspersons who want their results at the same time; (2) want to avoid answering the same questions for several different reporters; (3) need to let television and radio reporters film and tape their superintendent announcing the results; and (4) want to break the news to all the local news media at the same time. A news conference is useful when reporters ask many questions or a need exists to clarify a number of difficult points. A conference is not useful for a simple release of information.

These four alternatives take into account the diversity of situations in California school districts. Where there are only one or two local news media and the testing coordinator or superintendent has the facts well in mind, a telephone call can be sufficient (from the superintendent to a reporter):

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[3] See this chapter's resource materials for legal aspects of public information.

[4] This meeting is usually held in the first half of November each year. The exact date on which the test results will be reported can be learned by calling the State Board office in Sacramento (916-445-9016) a few weeks before the meeting.

[5] Taking a cue from Sacramento, one smart testing director calls up each local reporter the day before she reports test results to her school board. She invites the reporters to stop by her office well before the meeting. At that time she gives them a copy of her news release and board report and spends time discussing and clarifying the meaning of the scores. The result is fewer problems at the board meeting and better news reporting.

"Hello, John? I just wanted you to know that we are releasing our annual pupil testing results today. Shall I mail them to you? Or, if you like, you can drop by, and I'll be glad to go through them with you in detail."

Five Things All Reporters Will Want to Know

Regardless of how testing results are released, most reporters are interested in knowing five basic things. Be sure the five things are contained in all news releases, information memos, or board reports that are distributed to the media. If you are discussing results with a reporter, know the results thoroughly before you start.

1. *What are the test results?* How does the district compare with other districts in the state? What are the percentile scores for each grade? Where do the percentile ranks fall in relation to the comparison score band?
2. *How do the test results compare with last year's results?* Is the trend up or down?
3. *If the trend is higher or lower, what is the reason?* Budget cutbacks? A new reading program? Shorter instructional periods? A redesigned curriculum?
4. *What are you going to do with the test results?* A new program of some kind? Reallocation of funds? A new task force? If so, when will the public see these things materialize?
5. *How do you feel about the test results?* If you are pleased, say so. If you are not, it's good to express your concern.

Once you have covered the basics, some other *information may be useful:*

a. Particularly high- or low-scoring schools or grades

b. Unusual increases or decreases in scores

c. Number of children in the district taking the test

d. Purpose of testing

e. General level of scores statewide

f. Background information about the nature of group testing, the meaning of average scores, method of determining the comparison score band, and some of the significant background factors in a school district

g. Members of the district staff responsible for improvements

Questions About Working with the Media

Q. What should be done by a district in a metropolitan area lacking a local community newspaper? ("All we get are a couple of lines in the metropolitan newspaper.")

A. For convenience' sake the major news outlets probably get the scores from the office of the county superintendent of schools. (Check if you are not sure.) This situation implies (1) that a need exists to communicate with the community directly (via newsletter, for instance) rather than through the media; and (2) that the metropolitan press and radio and television stations are likely to be interested only if something unusual is present; for example,

How to Issue a News Release or Information Memorandum (Basic Technique)

Write or compose the release or memorandum and type a clean copy on 8½" x 11" paper. Check the copy thoroughly for accuracy (no guessing permitted). Xerox or lithograph enough copies (no carbons). Then either (1) mail them in regular business envelopes via first-class mail to all local news media; or (2) hand them to reporters. Be sure everyone gets his or her copy at about the same time. No favoritism should occur. Keep a copy for the file.

News releases and information memos (because they are complete and easy to read) are useful also to staff members, telephone clerks, principals, PTA officers, and others. Bulletin boards can be used effectively for this purpose.

a rapid gain in reading directly attributable to a specific program.

Q. Our district scores always appear in our metropolitan newspaper the day after the State Board meeting. What should we do about our community newspaper?

A. Jack McCurdy, education writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, says: "Any reporter of a community newspaper is going to be upset when he sees his scores for the first time in the *Los Angeles Times*. When I was a small-town reporter, I had more respect for public officials if they came to me first. Regardless of whether you have something serious to say, not making a public statement makes it appear that you're trying to hide information. You start off on the wrong foot." McCurdy urges such districts to release their results on the same day as the State Board meeting.

Q. Who should speak for the district through a news release or information memo or at a news conference?

A. The superintendent. According to *Releasing Test Scores*, a publication of the National School Public Relations Association, "The superintendent can and should defer to experts when questions get technical, but the superintendent is the spokesman the media wants."

Q. What tone should statements or news releases take if a district's scores are low or doing down?

A. Be factual. Report the full information and be sure to say what you intend to do about it. McCurdy of the *Los Angeles Times* says: "The most important thing is to try to maintain an objective point of view. No matter what the results show, the reporter will respect the fact that a school district is at least capable of taking an objective look at itself."

One school public relations professional advises: "Most people are reasonable. The public doesn't expect us to be perfect, nor to perform miracles. It does, however, expect us to be realistic, to face up to problems, and to come up with feasible plans for solving them. This is the viewpoint you must communicate. It won't do to be stumped or astonished by test scores. Think of the movies: the bad guys alibi; the good guys act."

Releasing Test Scores comments: "Some educators have argued forcefully that assessment test scores are an insignificant measure of student achievement. (Such arguments generally follow the presentation of low scores.) This 'cop-out' approach to assessment just doesn't work. As far as the 'outside world' is concerned, tests wouldn't be used if they didn't mean anything."

Q. What should I say, however, if I am sure the results of state testing do not show the real achievement levels of my district?

A. It is time to cite in detail other tests or assessments done in the district and to show in what way they differ from the state test results. It is not persuasive, however, to claim that the state test results are inaccurate unless hard data are at hand to support your view.

Q. There are some reporters I hardly ever see at our school board meeting. Do I need to send them our results, too?

How to Conduct a News Conference (Basic Technique)

Notify all local news media a day or two in advance. Hold the conference in a suitably large room if there will be television cameras; otherwise, an office or small room will do. Start the conference by handing out the test scores in the form of statistics, summaries, charts, tables, or narrative. Read or ad-lib a statement on how the district views the scores, what it plans to do about them, how it plans to use them, and so on. (Don't read aloud the written material you have just handed out.) Answer questions until all present have the information they need.

A. Rule one in getting along with representatives of the media is to give all reporters an equal break at the news. Be safe. Send your information to all media that may possibly be interested.

Q. How should I get testing information to the broadcast media—radio and television?

A. Do the same as with newspapers. Send the same material (news release, information memo, and so on) to all news media.

What Else?

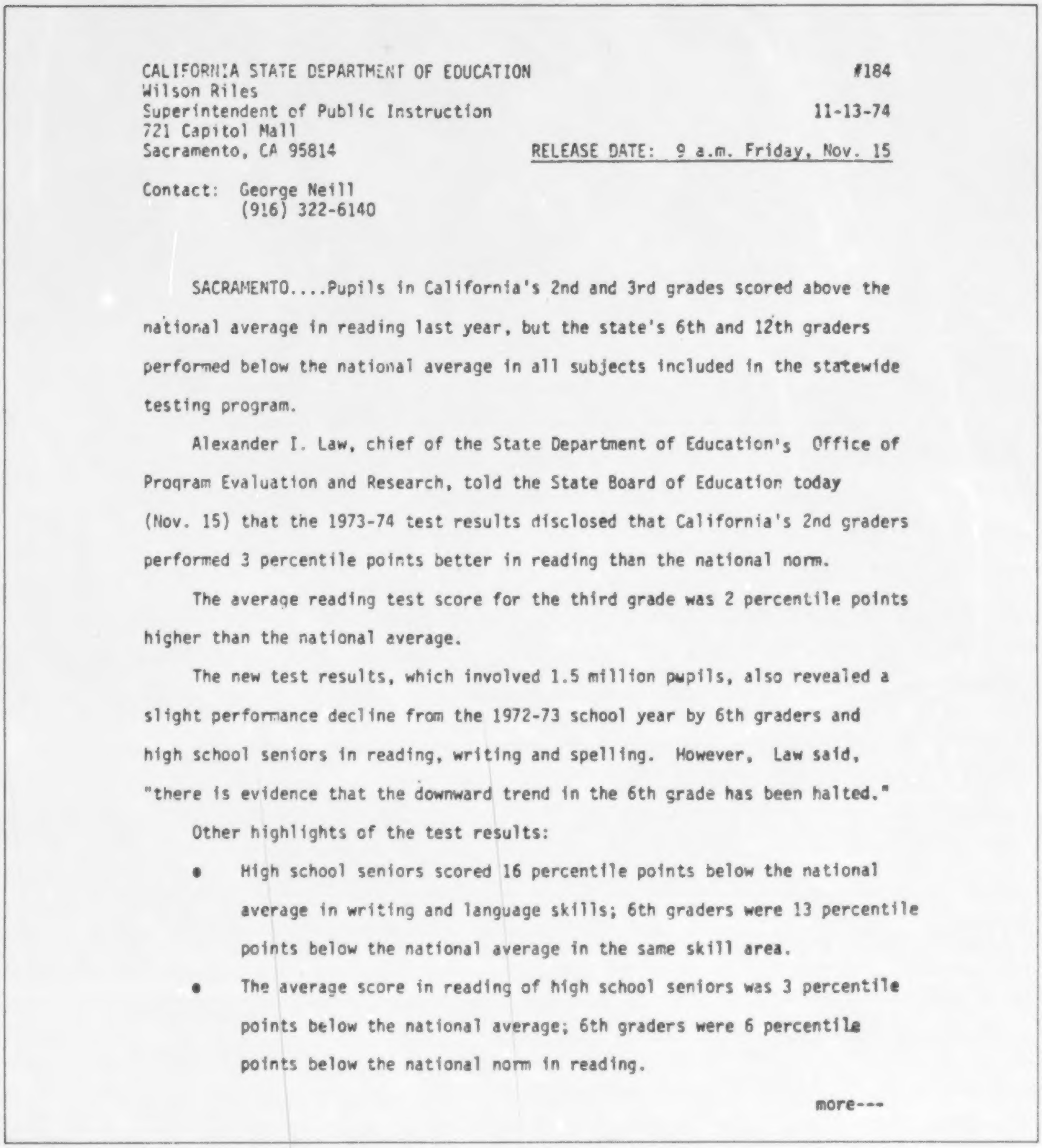
Don't talk about test results only once a year. Whether your results look good or bad, it is to your district's benefit to discuss them several times a year. Two ideas:

- If in November you talked about new programs, keep information coming during the winter and spring on how the programs are doing. The resource material for this chapter contains a sample news release and information memo on this matter.
- Let parents know when their children will be tested. Perhaps you can give them the test schedule for the year. Sample news releases and information memos on these topics are also contained in the resource material for this chapter.

Resource Material for Chapter VII

The State News Release

This is a copy of the news release issued by the Department of Education at the time scores were reported in November, 1974.



CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION #184
Wilson Riles
Superintendent of Public Instruction 11-13-74
721 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814 RELEASE DATE: 9 a.m. Friday, Nov. 15

Contact: George Neill
(916) 322-6140

SACRAMENTO....Pupils in California's 2nd and 3rd grades scored above the national average in reading last year, but the state's 6th and 12th graders performed below the national average in all subjects included in the statewide testing program.

Alexander I. Law, chief of the State Department of Education's Office of Program Evaluation and Research, told the State Board of Education today (Nov. 15) that the 1973-74 test results disclosed that California's 2nd graders performed 3 percentile points better in reading than the national norm.

The average reading test score for the third grade was 2 percentile points higher than the national average.

The new test results, which involved 1.5 million pupils, also revealed a slight performance decline from the 1972-73 school year by 6th graders and high school seniors in reading, writing and spelling. However, Law said, "there is evidence that the downward trend in the 6th grade has been halted."

Other highlights of the test results:

- High school seniors scored 16 percentile points below the national average in writing and language skills; 6th graders were 13 percentile points below the national average in the same skill area.
- The average score in reading of high school seniors was 3 percentile points below the national average; 6th graders were 6 percentile points below the national norm in reading.

more---

- The average score of high school seniors in mathematics was 2 percentile points below the national average, the same as 1972-73; 6th graders were 12 percentile points below the national math average, no change from the year before.
- High school seniors scored 3 percentile points below the national average in spelling; 6th graders were 8 percentile points below the national norm in spelling.

"The greatest weakness appears to be in the area of language and writing," Law said. He noted that both the 6th graders and the 12th graders scored 2 percentile points lower than 1972-73.

Because of the size and heterogeneity of California's population, the high average score for the state in the 2nd and 3rd grade is "remarkable," Law said.

"The emphasis on improving the instructional program in the lower grades in the past four or five years is paying off," he added. "Similar emphasis will be placed on the higher grades during the next two to four years as a result of the efforts of the Reform of Intermediate and Secondary Education (RISE) program launched last July by Wilson Riles, state superintendent of public instruction." A special RISE commission is at work now developing a program to overhaul the state's junior and senior high schools.

Law said the test results indicate that:

- Pupils who had attended preschools scored higher than those who did not.
- Pupils in medium-sized schools scored higher than pupils in small and large schools.
- Pupils who attend suburban schools scored higher than pupils in both rural and urban schools.
- Pupils whose parents were employed in professional fields scored higher than pupils whose parents were employed in skilled or semi-skilled occupations.

more---

Law said no other state conducts such a comprehensive testing program. California is the only state that tests five grades annually, he added.

The test results include a breakdown by school districts, Law said. Each district has received its average scores in each subject area tested, and the results are compared with state and national norms. In addition, an innovative index added last year provides each district with a comparison of how it is performing in relation to districts with similar pupil populations.

###

An Outline-Type Model News Release

This model of a news release is provided to school districts in Los Angeles County by Ann Barkelew, Public Information Officer in the office of the county superintendent of schools. To use the model, districts fill in the blanks with information on their own results.

Name of district
Title of office sending news release
Name of contact person
Telephone number of contact person
Date of news release

HEADLINE (optional)

______________________, Superintendent, ____________________School District, today announced achievement test results for the district's pupils in grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 12 that have been released from the State Department of Education. The tests were administered during the 1974-75 school year as part of the mandated statewide testing program.

THEN - Summarize the practical significance of test results. Include comparisons over previous years, using quotations from the superintendent.

Basic reading achievement of ____________ students in the grades tested (has
district's
continued to improve((has remained constant) during the past few years.

____________________ said, "______________________________."
Superintendent quotation on general trend

NOTE - If one of these two statements cannot be made, start paragraph by breaking down the general trend into grade levels.

Third graders showed the most significant gains in basic reading achievement with ____.

ALSO - Indicate any test changes that make certain specific raw scores comparisons difficult.

KEEP IN MIND - Sometimes numbers are easier to understand than percentages. For example, to say that 5,000 twelfth graders are reading at a higher level than the average twelfth grader in California means more than to say that 43% or less than half of the twelfth graders are doing so.

Often, the display of a three- to five-year span can demonstrate trends significantly.

NEXT	-Identify the tests used and how they are administered. Were all students at each grade level tested or was matrix sampling used? Explain briefly.
ALSO	-Point out specific areas of instruction and learning measured by this battery of tests, highlighting what is not measured.
IF APPLICABLE	-Define "norms" or state averages and explain how they are determined. Spell out limitations.
NEXT	-Explain the intent of the state testing program. It may be wise to use quotation from state department official or county schools office person.
FINALLY	-If you are pleased with the test results, say so. If not, indicate your concern. Don't become defensive. Above all, be open.

* * *

ADDITIONAL COPY IDEAS:

...Give your staff credit for what they are doing to help raise test scores.

...Identify programs that have been initiated during the current year to accelerate reading progress.

...Outline new programs (or types of increased instructional support) that are needed to improve performance. Cost of these new efforts should be stressed.

...Report on special norms (national norms for ESEA Title I pupils, for example) that match grades or schools in your district more closely.

...Stress and document important learning outcomes not measured by standardized tests.

Several Model News Releases and Information Memos

This resource material in this section contains models that can be used on five occasions during the year:

- *Models 1a and 1b.* To announce the release of test results (This model is somewhat long because it is intended to present most kinds of information that a school district is required to report. The version used by a particular district might be much shorter. *Model 1a* is followed by three alternative beginnings for the same release for use in different circumstances.)
- *Models 2a and 2b.* To announce the start of a program to correct areas in which students had received low test scores
- *Models 3a and 3b.* To follow up several months later on new programs your district had put into effect
- *Models 4a and 4b.* To announce your district's testing schedule at the beginning of the school year
- *Models 5a and 5b.* To announce upcoming testing two to three weeks before each test

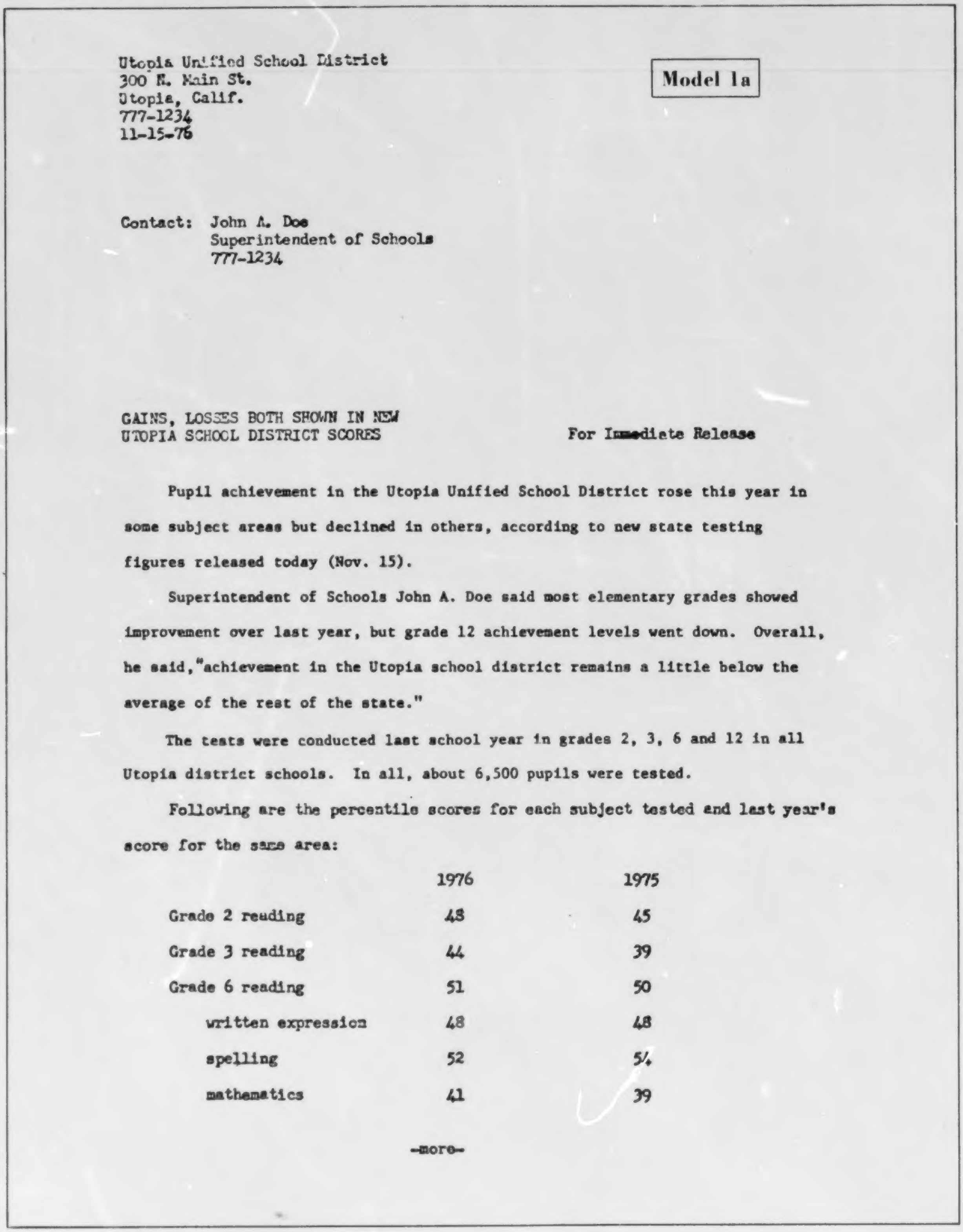
NOTE: Items *a* and *b* in each set contain the same information: *a* is in the format of a news release; *b* is in the format of an information memo. See the text of this chapter for the way to use each.

In addition you need to keep the following in mind when you use the model news releases and information memos:

1. These are only models. Be sure to substitute your own information. Change the wording or paragraph order wherever necessary. Add other kinds of information and details as appropriate.

2. Do not use the quotations. They are used only as models. Put your own comments and interpretations in your own quotations.

3. Be sure other nearby school districts are not sending similar sounding news releases to the same news media that you are. If so, change the way your information is worded so that news media will not get identical news releases from two school districts.



Model 1a

Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
11-15-76

Contact: John A. Doe
Superintendent of Schools
777-1234

GAINS, LOSSES BOTH SHOWN IN NEW UTOPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT SCORES

For Immediate Release

Pupil achievement in the Utopia Unified School District rose this year in some subject areas but declined in others, according to new state testing figures released today (Nov. 15).

Superintendent of Schools John A. Doe said most elementary grades showed improvement over last year, but grade 12 achievement levels went down. Overall, he said, "achievement in the Utopia school district remains a little below the average of the rest of the state."

The tests were conducted last school year in grades 2, 3, 6 and 12 in all Utopia district schools. In all, about 6,500 pupils were tested.

Following are the percentile scores for each subject tested and last year's score for the same area:

	1976	1975
Grade 2 reading	48	45
Grade 3 reading	44	39
Grade 6 reading	51	50
written expression	48	48
spelling	52	54
mathematics	41	39

-more-

Grade 12 reading	40	44
written expression	42	50
spelling	47	49
mathematics	55	51

The percentile score shows how pupils in that particular grade compare with pupils across the rest of the state. For example, a score in the 48th percentile means that the average Utopia pupil at that grade level did better than 47 percent of the average pupils in other California schools at that grade level but more poorly than 52 percent of the pupils. (The 50th percentile is considered average.)

Dr. Doe said that while the school district staff is pleased with the improved achievement in elementary grades, it is very concerned about the grade 12 scores. There is particular concern, he said, about the grade 12 students' achievement in reading and written expression.

"It appears that changes are needed at once in the way these subjects are taught and, perhaps, even in the curriculum and materials used in the classroom," said Dr. Doe.

This week Dr. Doe appointed a 12-member staff task force to look into ways this part of the high school program can be improved immediately. The task force will make its report at the Dec. 2 meeting of the Utopia Board of Education.

Dr. Doe said he will present recommendations to the board then for immediate steps, possibly including the diversion of funds from some other budget area into the high school English and reading programs.

These subject areas also will get priority consideration when the 1977-78 budget is drawn up this spring, the superintendent said.

"This is the first year in the last five that grade 12 scores have declined this rapidly," said the superintendent. "While this is not serious enough yet to be called a trend, we must work on it before it does become a trend here."

-more-

Gains, Losses Both Shown in New
Utopia School District Scores
3-3-3-3-3-3-3

At the same time, Dr. Doe said increased efforts by elementary teachers appear to be paying off.

He gave credit to the teachers for their six-week study last winter, which resulted in the adoption of new team-teaching programs at three elementary schools and the creation of specialized reading libraries at two others.

"Our achievement in the elementary grades is not yet as high as we would like it to be," he said, "but I believe we have built a firm base for continued improvement."

The state testing program also shows whether a school district's average scores in each grade are above, within, or below expectations for the district. Background factors considered are test scores in lower grades, number of bilingual pupils, and socioeconomic conditions of the community.

Utopia scores were above expectations in grade 2 reading, grade 6 reading and spelling, and grade 12 mathematics. They were within expectations in grade 3 reading, grade 6 written expression, and grade 12 spelling. They were below expectations in grade 6 mathematics and grade 12 reading and written expression.

The state analysis showed that the Utopia School District is higher than the state average in socioeconomic level, the level of parent education, tax rate, and expenditure per schoolchild. It is below the state average in the number of bilingual children, minority children, and class sizes.

The scores reported here are the averages for all Utopia children at each grade level. Many schools or classes, of course, scored higher or lower than the district-wide averages. Scores of individual pupils are not computed by the state.

Some of the major improvements shown in this year's testing are:

— Sixth-grade reading scores at Washington Elementary School rose this year from the 45th to 66th percentile.

-more-

— Grade 2 children at Jefferson Elementary School—who are in a team-teaching program—showed improvements in reading from the 24th to 44th percentile.

— Grade 12 students at Hamilton High School continued high achievement in mathematics, going from the 57th to 67th percentile.

Grade 12 students are tested each December, and those in grades 2, 3, and 6 are tested in April and May.

###

Other Beginnings for Model 1a

Depending on your circumstances, this same news release could also begin in several other ways. Here are three other possible beginnings:

ACHIEVEMENT SCORES FALL IN MOST
GRADES IN UTOPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pupil testing scores generally declined in both elementary and secondary grades this year in the Utopia Unified School District, the result of continued cutbacks in staff and materials.

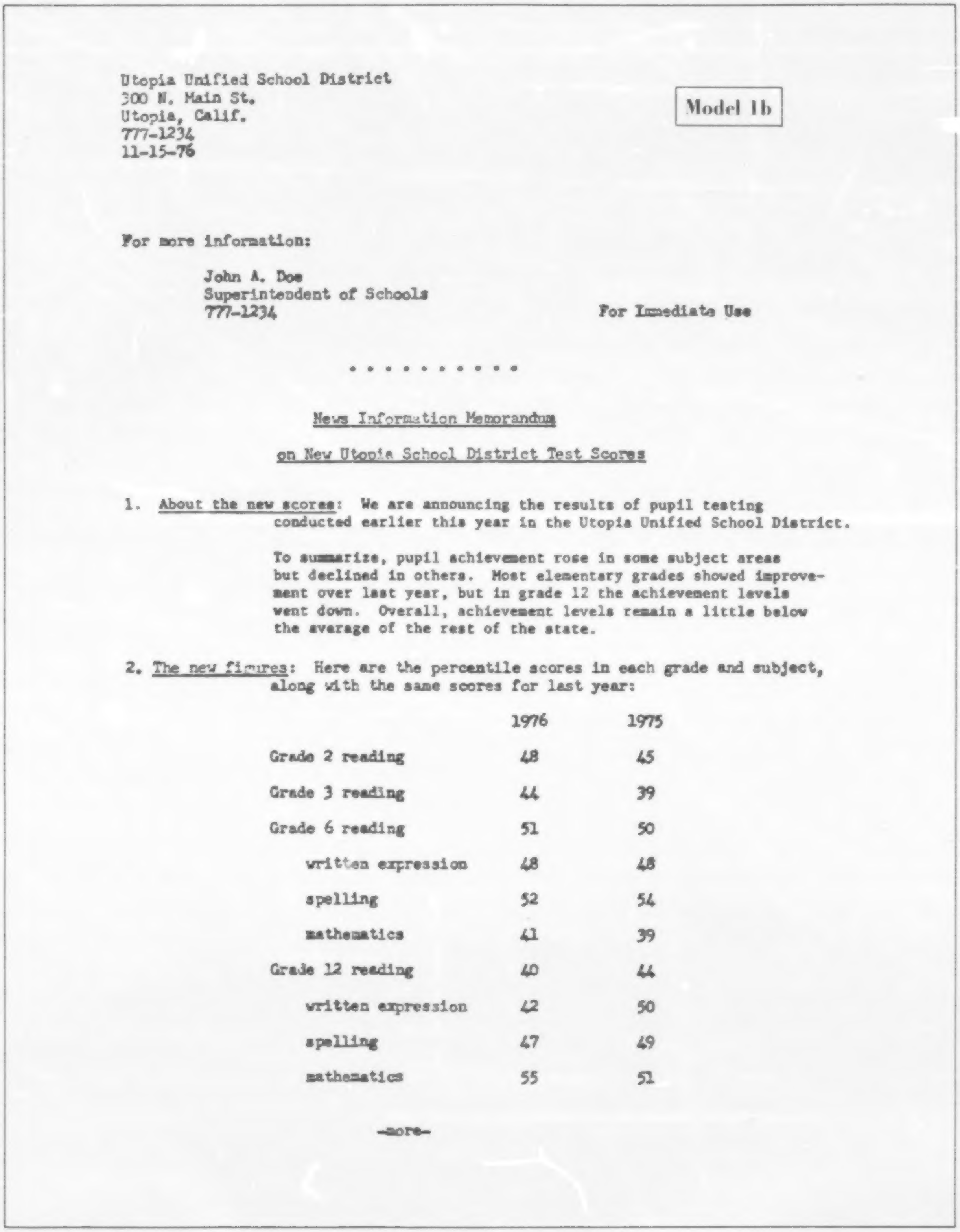
There were, however, several bright spots among the generally disappointing test results, according to Superintendent of Schools John A. Doe.

PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT SCORES LEVEL OFF
IN UTOPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Recent declines in pupil achievement scores in the Utopia Unified School District seem to have been stopped, with some grades even showing gains, according to new scores reported today.

HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT REPORTED IN
MOST GRADES IN UTOPIA SCHOOLS

Most pupil testing scores have risen to their highest levels in the last four years in the Utopia Unified School District, according to new results reported today.



Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
11-15-76

Model 1b

For more information:

John A. Doe
Superintendent of Schools
777-1234

For Immediate Use

• • • • • • • • • • •

News Information Memorandum

on New Utopia School District Test Scores

1. About the new scores: We are announcing the results of pupil testing conducted earlier this year in the Utopia Unified School District.

   To summarize, pupil achievement rose in some subject areas but declined in others. Most elementary grades showed improvement over last year, but in grade 12 the achievement levels went down. Overall, achievement levels remain a little below the average of the rest of the state.

2. The new figures: Here are the percentile scores in each grade and subject, along with the same scores for last year:

	1976	1975
Grade 2 reading	48	45
Grade 3 reading	44	39
Grade 6 reading	51	50
written expression	48	48
spelling	52	54
mathematics	41	39
Grade 12 reading	40	44
written expression	42	50
spelling	47	49
mathematics	55	51

-more-

News Information Memo on
School Test Scores
2-2-2-2-2-2

(The percentile score shows how pupils in that particular grade compare with results across the rest of the state. For example, a score in the 48th percentile means that the average Utopia pupil at that grade level did better than the average pupil in 7 per cent of other California schools at that level, but more poorly than 52 per cent of the pupils. The 50th percentile is considered average.)

3. How we interpret the scores: Our school district staff is pleased with the improved achievement in elementary grades. But they are very concerned with the grade 12 scores, particularly about the grade 12 achievement in reading and written expression. It appears that changes are needed at once in the way these subjects are taught and, perhaps, even in the curriculum and materials used in the classroom.

This is the first year in the last five that grade 12 scores have declined this rapidly. While this is not serious enough yet to be called a trend, we must work on it before it does become a trend here.

4. Actions being taken: Several steps are being taken in regard to the new scores:

— A 12-member staff task force was appointed this week by Dr. Doe to look into ways this part of the high school program can be improved immediately. The task force will make a report at the Dec. 2 meeting of the Utopia Board of Education.

— At that meeting, Dr. Doe will present recommendations for immediate action. These may include diverting funds from other budget areas into high school English and reading.

— Also, these subject areas will get priority consideration when we draw up next year's budget this spring.

5. Some good news: The improved elementary scores appear to be the result of the six-week study conducted last winter by our elementary teachers. As a result of that study, we adopted new team-teaching programs at three elementary schools and created specialized reading libraries at two others.

Our achievement in the elementary grades is not yet as high as we would like it to be, but I believe we have built a firm base for continued improvement.

We had these examples of major improvements this year in our scores:

— Sixth-grade reading scores at Washington Elementary School rose from the 45th to 66th percentile.

— Grade 2 children at Jefferson Elementary School increased their reading scores from the 24th to 44th percentile. They are in a team-teaching program.

-more-

-- Grade 12 students at Hamilton High School continued high achievement in mathematics, going from the 57th to the 67th percentile.

6. Background factors in testing: Besides the percentile scores above, the state also shows whether scores in each subject are above, within, or below expectations for each district. They base these expectations on a number of background factors for each school district.

Here is how Utopia stood in relation to the comparison score bands:

Above expectations: grade 2 reading, grade 6 reading and spelling, grade 12 mathematics.

Within expectations: grade 3 reading, grade 6 written expression, grade 12 spelling.

Below expectations: grade 6 mathematics and grade 12 reading and written expression.

In the most important of those background factors, Utopia was:

--Higher than the state average in socioeconomic level, level of parent education, tax rate, and expenditure per child.

--Lower than the state average in number of bilingual children, minority children, and average class size.

7. Background on testing: The figures reported are the average for all Utopia children at each of the grade levels reported. Naturally, many schools and individual classes scored higher or lower than the district average. The state doesn't compute scores of individual pupils.

The testing took place at the following times: grade 12 in December; grades 2, 3, and 6 in April and May.

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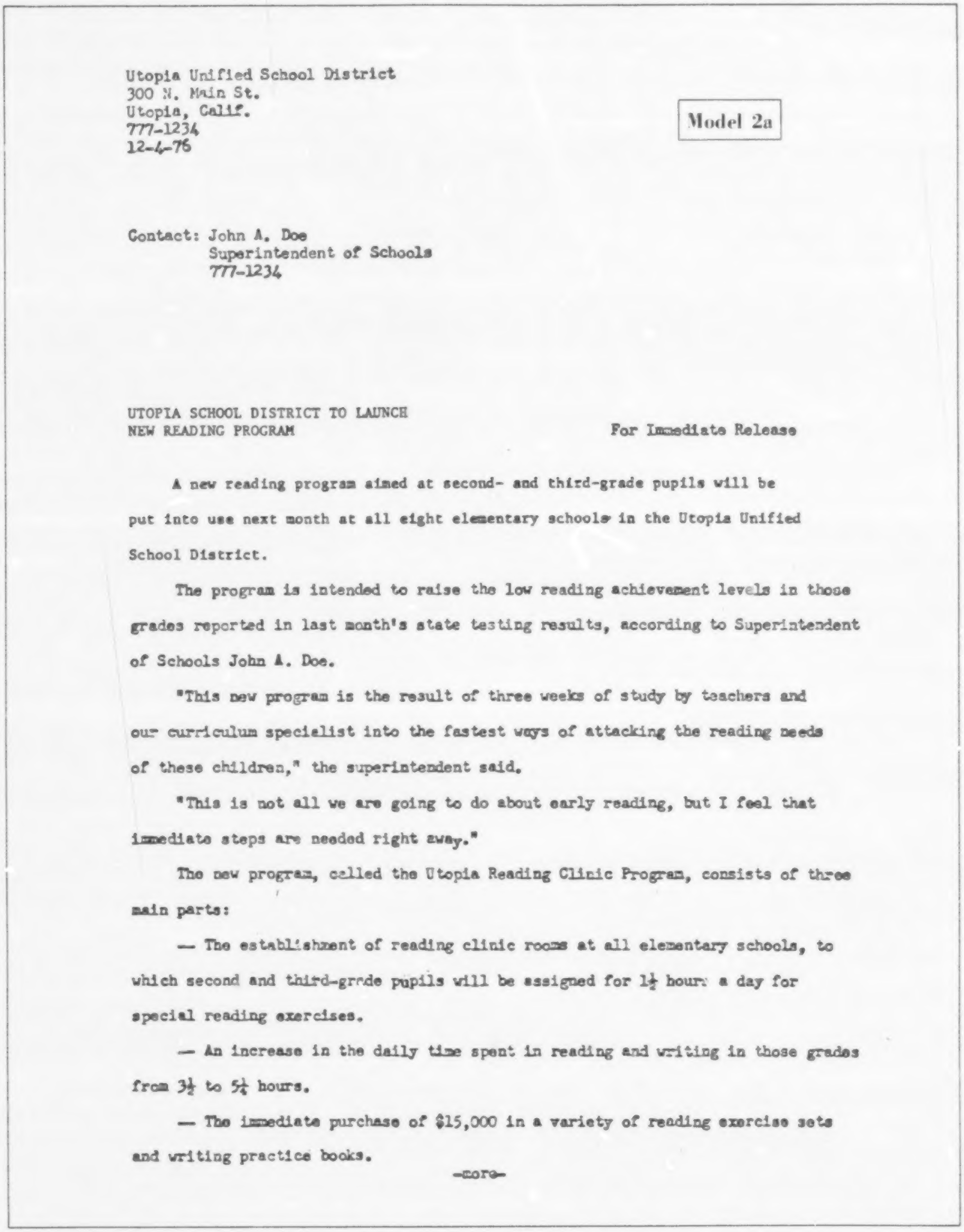

Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
12-4-76

Model 2a

Contact: John A. Doe
Superintendent of Schools
777-1234

UTOPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT TO LAUNCH NEW READING PROGRAM

For Immediate Release

A new reading program aimed at second- and third-grade pupils will be put into use next month at all eight elementary schools in the Utopia Unified School District.

The program is intended to raise the low reading achievement levels in those grades reported in last month's state testing results, according to Superintendent of Schools John A. Doe.

"This new program is the result of three weeks of study by teachers and our curriculum specialist into the fastest ways of attacking the reading needs of these children," the superintendent said.

"This is not all we are going to do about early reading, but I feel that immediate steps are needed right away."

The new program, called the Utopia Reading Clinic Program, consists of three main parts:

— The establishment of reading clinic rooms at all elementary schools, to which second and third-grade pupils will be assigned for 1½ hours a day for special reading exercises.

— An increase in the daily time spent in reading and writing in those grades from 3½ to 5¼ hours.

— The immediate purchase of $15,000 in a variety of reading exercise sets and writing practice books.

-more-

Dr. Doe said the new program was approved in principle at the Nov. 28 meeting of the Utopia Board of Education. Transfers of funds totaling $18,500 to support the program will be submitted for approval at the board's next meeting, Dec. 16.

Other steps to improve reading will be planned during the next two months by a committee of teachers, parents, and other school district staff members.

"These will likely require much greater expenditures than our immediate new program," said Dr. Doe. "Recommendations growing out of the committee's work will be the basis for greater reading expenditures when we draw up our budget this spring.

"We have no money to spare in any part of our budget, and the financial situation is likely to get worse. But we must put the important things first, and reading is certainly one of them."

###

Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
12-4-76

Model 2b

For more information:

John A. Doe
Superintendent of Schools
777-1234

For Immediate Use

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News Information Memorandum on New

Reading Program in Utopia School District

1. The new program: Today, we are announcing the start of a new reading program for all grade 2 and 3 pupils in the Utopia Unified School District. It will go into effect next month in all of our eight elementary schools.

2. Program details: We are calling the program the Utopia Reading Clinic Program. These are its three main parts:

   -- The establishment of reading clinic rooms at all elementary schools, to which second and third-grade pupils will be assigned for 1½ hours a day for special reading exercises.

   — An increase in the daily time spent in reading and writing in Grades 2 and 3 from 3½ to 5¼ hours.

   — The immediate purchase of $15,000 in a variety of reading exercise sets and writing practice books.

3. Other steps: We will be planning other steps during the next two months to improve reading. This planning will be done by a committee of teachers, parents and other school district staff members.

   These steps are likely to require much greater expenditures than our immediate new program. Recommendations growing out of the committee's work will be the basis for greater reading expenditures when we draw up our budget this spring.

   We have no money to spare in any part of our budget, and the financial situation is likely to get worse. But we must put important things first, and reading is certainly one of them.

4. The reasons: This new program is intended to improve the low reading achievement levels that were reported last month in the state testing results for grades 2 and 3.

-more-

5. Background on the new program: The program is the result of three weeks of study by teachers and our district's curriculum specialist as to the fastest ways of meeting the reading needs of these children. This program is not all we are going to do about early reading, but I feel that immediate steps are needed.

6. Board of education action: The new program was approved in principle by the board of education at its Nov. 28 meeting. At its next meeting, Dec. 16, I plan to ask for transfers of funds totaling $18,500 to support the new program.

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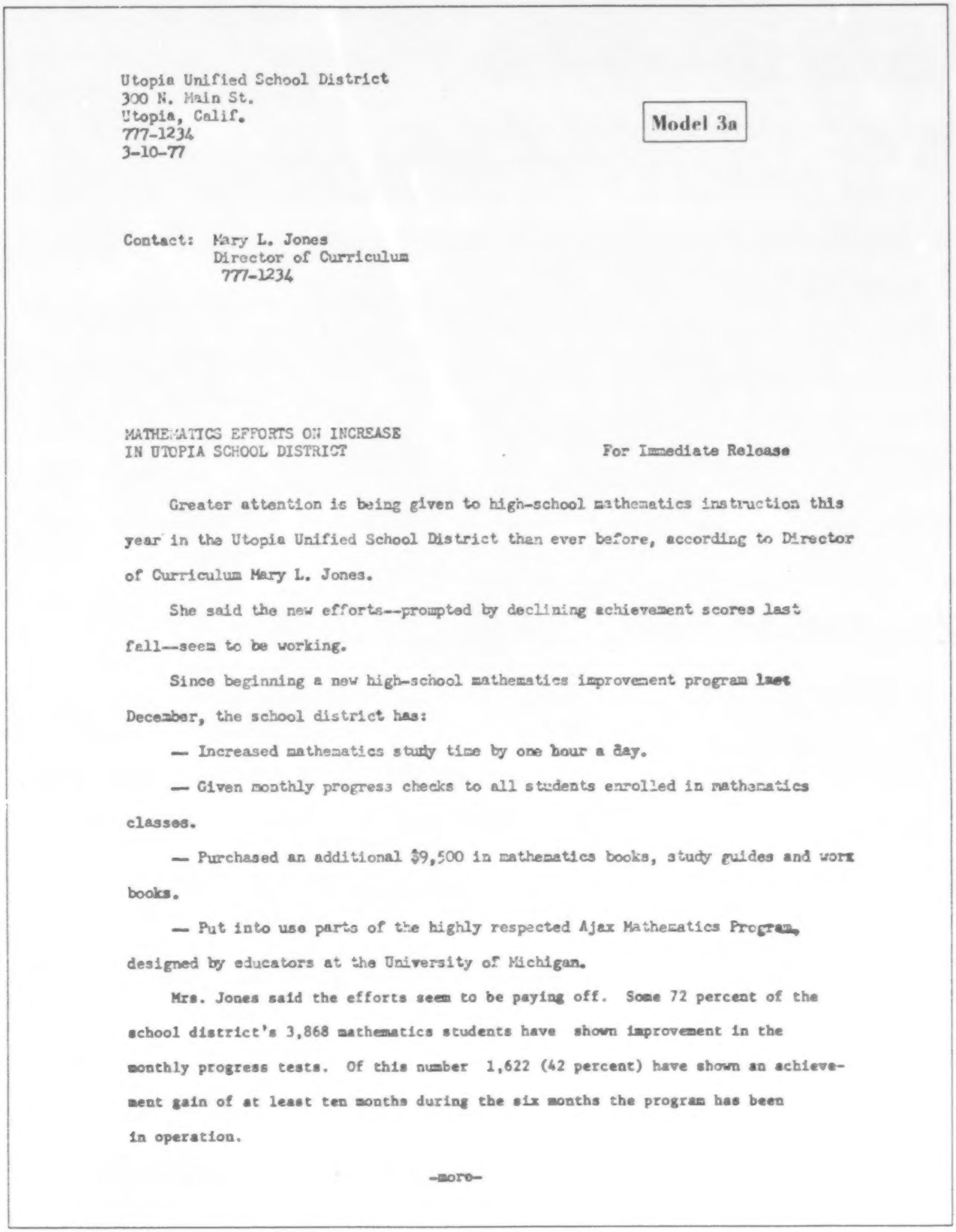

Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
3-10-77

Model 3a

Contact: Mary L. Jones
Director of Curriculum
777-1234

MATHEMATICS EFFORTS ON INCREASE IN UTOPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

For Immediate Release

Greater attention is being given to high-school mathematics instruction this year in the Utopia Unified School District than ever before, according to Director of Curriculum Mary L. Jones.

She said the new efforts--prompted by declining achievement scores last fall--seem to be working.

Since beginning a new high-school mathematics improvement program last December, the school district has:

— Increased mathematics study time by one hour a day.

— Given monthly progress checks to all students enrolled in mathematics classes.

— Purchased an additional $9,500 in mathematics books, study guides and work books.

— Put into use parts of the highly respected Ajax Mathematics Program, designed by educators at the University of Michigan.

Mrs. Jones said the efforts seem to be paying off. Some 72 percent of the school district's 3,868 mathematics students have shown improvement in the monthly progress tests. Of this number 1,622 (42 percent) have shown an achievement gain of at least ten months during the six months the program has been in operation.

-more-

"There is no doubt that this improvement is directly attributable to the new program," said Mrs. Jones. "Our task now is to keep the students' interest in mathematics high and to see if we can continue to raise their achievement a substantial amount each month.

"It is probably too early to say that the program is totally successful, but all the indications we have seen so far are positive."

The new efforts are being made in both high schools in the district, Washington and Jefferson, and are directed by the chairperson of the mathematics department at each school.

###

Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
3-10-77

Model 3b

For more information:

Mary L. Jones
Director of Curriculum
777-1234

For Immediate Use

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News Information Memorandum
on Utopia Schools' Math Efforts

1. The basic information: Last December, the Utopia Unified School District greatly increased its efforts in the area of high-school mathematics. Now it appears that those efforts are having a good effect on student achievement.

2. Background information: The increased efforts were put into effect after state testing results last fall showed that Grade 12 mathematics achievement here was declining. These steps were taken:

   - Mathematics study time was increased one hour a day.
   - Monthly progress checks were given to all students enrolled in mathematics classes.
   - An additional $9,500 in mathematics books, study guides and work books was purchased.
   - Parts of the highly respected Ajax Mathematics Program, designed by educators at the University of Michigan, were put into use.

   With all these, greater attention is being given to high-school mathematics instruction this year than ever before in our school district.

3. The results: The results have been very positive. Of our 3,868 mathematics students, 72 percent have shown improvement in their monthly progress tests. Of these 1,622 (42 percent) have shown an achievement gain of at least ten months during the six months the program has been in operation. There is no doubt that this improvement is directly attributable to the new program. Our task now is to keep the students' interest in mathematics high and to see if we can continue to raise their achievement a substantial amount each month. It is probably too early to say that the program is totally successful, but all the indications we have so far are positive.

4. About the program: The program is being used at both of our high schools, Washington and Jefferson, and is directed at each school by the chairperson of the mathematics department.

###

Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
10-12-77

Model 4a

Contact: John A. Doe
Superintendent of Schools
777-1234

TESTING SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED IN UTOPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

For Immediate Release

The 1977-78 pupil testing schedule in the Utopia Unified School District was announced this week by Superintendent of Schools John A. Doe. Pupils will be given state-required tests as follows:

Grade 1 — Week of Sept. 18.

Grade 12 — Week of Jan. 12, 1978.

Grade 6 — Week of April 26-May 4.

Grades 2 and 3 — Week of May 14.

Testing will take place in each pupil's regular classroom or homeroom. The tests will require from 30 to 40 minutes to complete.

The testing is required by the state to measure the effectiveness of school programs and pupil achievement throughout the state. Results of this year's testing will be reported by the state in November, 1978.

###

Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
10-12-77

Model 4b

For more information:

John A. Doe
Superintendent of Schools
777-1234

For Immediate Use

• • • • • • •

News Information Memorandum

on Utopia School District Testing Schedule

1. The activity: We are announcing the 1977-78 testing schedule for all pupils in the Utopia Unified School District. These are tests required by the state as part of the California Assessment Program.

   The schedule is:

   Grade 1 — Week of Sept. 18, 1977

   Grade 12 — Week of Jan. 12, 1978

   Grade 6 — Week of April 26-May 4

   Grades 2 and 3 — Week of May 14

2. About the tests: Each child will take the test in his or her regular classroom or homeroom. The tests vary in length from 30 to 40 minutes.

   The state requires these tests to measure the effectiveness of school programs and of pupil achievement throughout the state. The state will release the results of the testing in November, 1978.

###

Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
5-1-77

Model 5a

Contact: John A. Doe
Superintendent of Schools
777-1234

GRADE 2, 3 PUPILS TO BE TESTED IN UTOPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

For Immediate Release

Grade 2 and 3 pupils in the Utopia Unified School District will take state-required reading tests during the week of May 14, it was announced today.

The tests are part of the statewide California Assessment Program, which measures the effectiveness of school programs and pupil achievement throughout the state. The results will be reported by the state in November.

Testing of grade 2 and 3 pupils will take about 30 minutes. The tests measure such reading skills as word identification, vocabulary, comprehension, and study skills.

The state testing is in addition to regular tests given by the school district to discover each pupil's specific study needs.

###

Model 5b

Utopia Unified School District
300 N. Main St.
Utopia, Calif.
777-1234
5-1-77

For more information:

John A. Doe
Superintendent of Schools
777-1234

For Immediate Use

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News Information Memorandum

on Upcoming Pupil Testing

1. The activity: State testing of pupils in grades 2 and 3 of the Utopia Unified School District will take place during the week of May 14. Reading tests will be given in each child's regular classroom. They take about 30 minutes to complete. The results will be reported in November by the state.

2. The purpose: This is part of the California Assessment Program, which is sponsored and required by the state. Its purpose is to measure the effectiveness of school programs and pupil achievement throughout the state.

3. Other details: The reading tests measure several skills: word identification, vocabulary, comprehension and study skills.

   These tests are in addition to regular tests sponsored by the school district to discover the specific study needs of each pupil.

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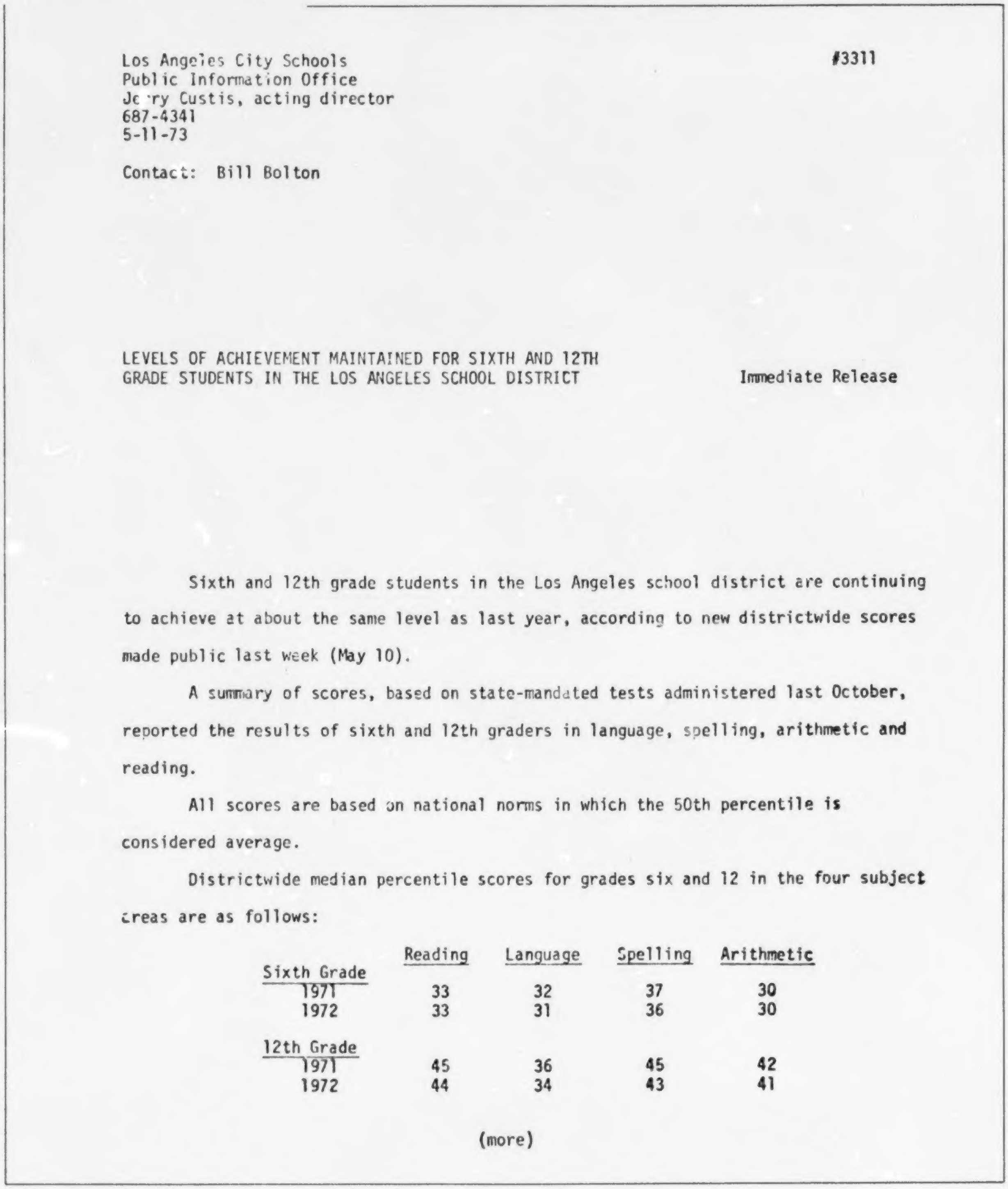
Two Sample News Releases on Test Results from Los Angeles

First Example from Los Angeles



Los Angeles City Schools
Public Information Office
Jerry Custis, acting director
687-4341
5-11-73

#3311

Contact: Bill Bolton

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT MAINTAINED FOR SIXTH AND 12TH GRADE STUDENTS IN THE LOS ANGELES SCHOOL DISTRICT

Immediate Release

Sixth and 12th grade students in the Los Angeles school district are continuing to achieve at about the same level as last year, according to new districtwide scores made public last week (May 10).

A summary of scores, based on state-mandated tests administered last October, reported the results of sixth and 12th graders in language, spelling, arithmetic and reading.

All scores are based on national norms in which the 50th percentile is considered average.

Districtwide median percentile scores for grades six and 12 in the four subject areas are as follows:

	Reading	Language	Spelling	Arithmetic
Sixth Grade				
1971	33	32	37	30
1972	33	31	36	30
12th Grade				
1971	45	36	45	42
1972	44	34	43	41

(more)

In reading, 125 of the city's 436 elementary schools and 24 of the 49 regular high schools scored at or above the national average.

The tests were administered prior to the implementation of the school district's preferred reading program and the allocation of additional resources to strengthen reading instruction.

As part of the district program, 118 elementary reading positions and 108 bilingual English-as-a-Second Language teachers were added in 1972-73.

In addition, Superintendent of Schools William J. Johnston has recommended an expenditure of $10 million in 1973-74 for the district's reading program and an additional 108 bilingual ESL elementary teachers, 216 part-time elementary instructional aides and 324 part-time secondary instructional aides.

Superintendent Johnston said he is "optimistic that the decline in achievement has been arrested and that the additional emphasis placed on reading will make it possible for the district to reach its stated goals in the spring of 1974 when the program will be evaluated."

The goals call for all schools that scored below the 20th percentile on the 1971 tests to experience a minimum gain of 10 percentile points and those schools that scored between the 20th and 45th percentile a minimum gain of five percentile points, both by June of 1974.

Comparison of tests results for the last two years reveal that the sixth graders scored at the same grade level on all four achievement tests in 1972 as they did in 1971.

This is the first comparison in the four-year testing period in which no drop in grade level scores occurred, although there was a decline of one percentile point in the median scores for language and spelling in 1972. This percentile drop is the product of mathematical tables rather than any change in the actual achievement.

(more)

Achievement Levels Maintained #3311
3-3-3

Superintendent Johnston said the district is administering the same tests to the same group of sixth graders this month to determine the extent to which pupils have improved during the school year. Results of the testing program will be available by the end of June.

Participating in the testing program were 46,521 sixth grade pupils, about 96 per cent, and 34,847 12th graders, approximately 90 per cent.

In the sixth grade the top marks were made in each category by:

Reading -- Pacific Palisades, 818 Via de la Paz, Pacific Palisades, 80, and Dearborn Street, 9240 Wish Ave., Northridge, 79.

Language -- Encino, 16941 Addison St., Encino, 73, and Lanai Road, 4241 Lanai Rd., Encino, Pacific Palisades, and Third Street, 201 S. June St., all 70.

Spelling -- Mt. Washington, 3981 San Rafael Ave., 76, and Oso Avenue, 5724 Oso Ave., Woodland Hills, and Third Street, both 71.

Arithmetic -- Canyon, 421 Entrada Dr., Santa Monica, 96, and Dearborn Street, 85.

Top 12th grade scores were made by:

Reading -- Palisades, 15777 Bowdoin St., Pacific Palisades, 66, and Taft, 5461 Winnetka Ave., Woodland Hills, 63.

Language -- Palisades, 63, and El Camino Real, 5440 Valley Circle Blvd., Woodland Hills, Taft, and University, 11800 Texas Ave., all three 52.

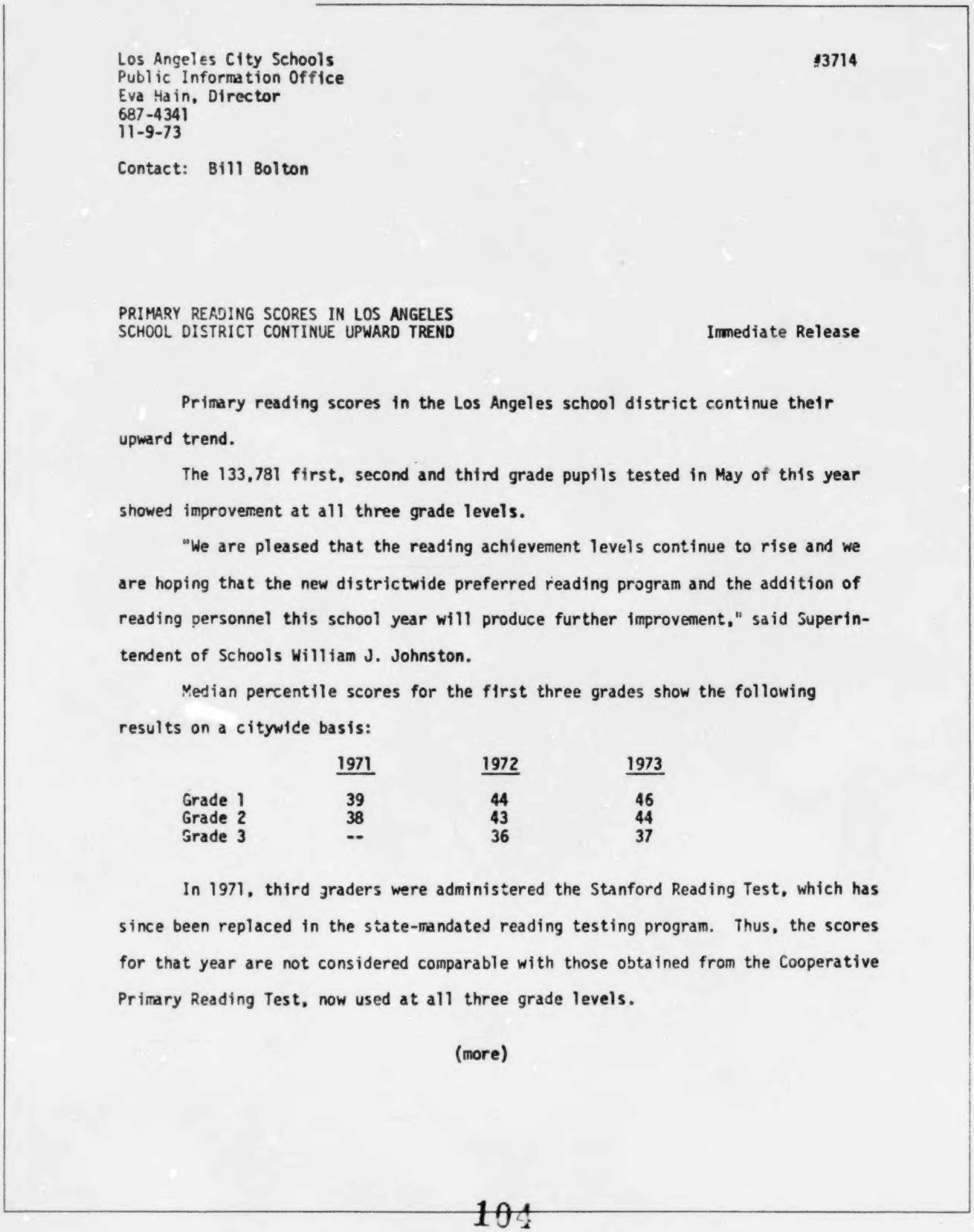
Spelling--Palisades, 64, Hollywood, 1521 N. Highland Ave., and University, both 58.

Arithmetic -- Palisades, 73, and El Camino Real, 71.

# # #

5-11-73

Second Example from Los Angeles



Los Angeles City Schools
Public Information Office
Eva Hain, Director
687-4341
11-9-73

#3714

Contact: Bill Bolton

PRIMARY READING SCORES IN LOS ANGELES
SCHOOL DISTRICT CONTINUE UPWARD TREND

Immediate Release

Primary reading scores in the Los Angeles school district continue their upward trend.

The 133,781 first, second and third grade pupils tested in May of this year showed improvement at all three grade levels.

"We are pleased that the reading achievement levels continue to rise and we are hoping that the new districtwide preferred reading program and the addition of reading personnel this school year will produce further improvement," said Superintendent of Schools William J. Johnston.

Median percentile scores for the first three grades show the following results on a citywide basis:

	1971	1972	1973
Grade 1	39	44	46
Grade 2	38	43	44
Grade 3	--	36	37

In 1971, third graders were administered the Stanford Reading Test, which has since been replaced in the state-mandated reading testing program. Thus, the scores for that year are not considered comparable with those obtained from the Cooperative Primary Reading Test, now used at all three grade levels.

(more)

Although the school district initiated a $10 million preferred reading program in September, the current reading scores are the result of tests administered last May and would not reflect this increased emphasis on reading.

The $10 million appropriation provides an average increase for reading of about $15 for each elementary and secondary pupil in the district.

Teachers, advisory council members and school administrators have worked together in defining goals and objectives for their schools and then selected the reading instructional programs which they felt would meet the requirements of individual pupils at their schools.

Superintendent Johnston said, "In addition to continuing our efforts to improve reading achievement for our pupils, the preferred reading program is in keeping with the school district's policy of decentralization and the shifting of some of the major decision-making to the local school level."

In a further expansion of the reading effort, the school district provided in the current school year budget $2.4 million to expand the bilingual-bicultural and English-as-a-Second Language programs.

The funds support 108 additional ESL elementary teachers, doubling the number added in 1972-73, and provide for 216 elementary instructional aides and 324 secondary instructional aides, all assigned on the basis of need to the 12 administrative areas of the school district.

"These are modest expansions which will strengthen our reading program and should lead to improved reading progress," Dr. Johnston said.

The May tests were administered in 437 elementary schools. Average scores of first, second, and third grade pupils in 125 of those schools were above the 50th percentile.

In addition, first grade averages at more than 200 schools, second grade averages at nearly 200 schools, and third grade averages at more than 150 schools were above the 50th percentile.

(more)

Primary Reading Scores
3-3-3

#3714

The average pupil scores by the 12 administrative areas are as follows:

AREA	GRADE	1971	1972	1973
A (San Pedro, Harbor, Carson, Gardena areas)	1	39	43	43
	2	39	43	46
	3		38	39
B (Huntington Park, South Gate, Bell portions of South Central Los Angeles)	1	36	38	39
	2	28	31	32
	3		23	26
C (Portions of South Central Los Angeles and Westchester)	1	33	39	42
	2	26	32	33
	3		22	23
D (West Los Angeles, Venice, Pacific Palisades)	1	51	52	61
	2	51	51	57
	3		50	50
E (Portions of West and Southwest Los Angeles, Crenshaw area)	1	34	40	42
	2	35	37	40
	3		29	29
F (Hollywood, downtown Los Angeles, portions of South Central Los Angeles)	1	35	41	40
	2	30	35	35
	3		29	29
G (East Los Angeles)	1	35	36	39
	2	28	30	35
	3		24	26
H (Northeast and portions of East Los Angeles)	1	38	39	40
	2	36	43	38
	3		38	34
I (East San Fernando Valley and Sunland-Tujunga)	1	42	47	51
	2	50	50	51
	3		48	46
J (Central San Fernando Valley)	1	56	60	67
	2	54	59	58
	3		54	56
K (North San Fernando Valley)	1	38	46	50
	2	41	49	49
	3		40	45
L (West San Fernando Valley)	1	65	70	73
	2	58	61	62
	3		58	60

11-9-73

# # #

Legal Obligations on the Release of Public Information

When do state test results become public information? According to California law, they are public as soon as they are reported to the State Board of Education in November.

The law does not, however, invalidate the custom of most school districts to wait until later to release the results locally and report them formally to their boards of education. But the law does require that – when requested – the State Department of Education, the office of the county superintendent of schools, and *your own district office* must give out district, individual school, or individual grade results after the November meeting of the State Board.

Two parts of state law apply here. The first, the California Records Act (sections 6250 to 6261 of the Government Code) requires that all material defined by law as public records be open to inspection at all times. Section 6250 states that ". . . access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business is a fundamental and necessary right of every person in the state." And Section 6253 states, in part:

> Public records are open to inspection at all times during the office hours of the state or local agency, and every citizen has a right to inspect any public record, except as hereafter provided. Every agency may adopt regulations stating the procedures to be followed when making its records available in accordance with this section.

Thomas M. Griffin, Chief Counsel of the Department of Education, concludes that state testing results are considered public records and that school boards and the Department of Education are classified as state or local agencies. "Citizens have the right to get copies of information unless the statute defines it as confidential," he said.

The second part of state law is Chapter 9 of the same Government Code, also known as the Ralph M. Brown Act. It requires public commissions, boards, and councils to conduct "the people's business" openly and with full public knowledge and consent. Section 54950 states:

> The people in delegating authority do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. . . .

In Chapter VIII . . .

- **The Four Target Audiences**
- **Where People Get Their School Information**
- **Points That Must Be Communicated**
- **Checklist of Communications Methods**

○ Reference Material – Sample School District Newsletters

VIII Reporting to Staff and Community

> *. . . [You] should not think of communicating educational assessment information to the "public" but to several publics. . . . Different audiences have different informational needs. These audiences and needs must be identified and accommodated.*
>
> *Releasing Test Scores*

The news media–important as they are–may not be your prime means of communicating test results. For one thing, not everybody pays heed to the news. And for another, all news media selectively filter the information they report to their listeners or readers.

Listen for a moment to the findings of Ned S. Hubbell, a pioneer polltaker and public relations consultant for school districts. His surveys, Hubbell says, point out that different types of people pay attention to different sources for their information about the schools. Parents, for instance, get their school news from these sources (listed in order of influence):

1. Their children
2. Other people (neighbors, peers, school employees)
3. The news media
4. School publications, newsletters, and so on

Nonparents, however, find out about the schools from:

1. The news media
2. Other people (neighbors, parents, peers, school employees)
3. Children of other families
4. Organizations

Thus, as many have always suspected, the back fence sometimes is as powerful as the front page in communicating information.

Our Main Audience

Hubbell's explanation covers *how* we might communicate test results (using what middlemen or what media). The next question is *to whom* we should be doing our communicating for the strongest results. Nonparents (call them taxpayers) and parents are two of the four main target groups:

The pupils (their scores)
The parents (their kids)
The taxpayers (their money)
The staff (their jobs)[1]

Now applying Hubbell's explanation to the four main target groups, we can try to list all the different ways in which people find out about what's happening in the schools. This might be the listing for a typical district but might differ somewhat in your own district:

- *Parents* get their information by:
  Talking to their children
  Talking with friends and neighbors
  Talking with teachers and other school employees
  Telephoning their local school
  Attending PTA meetings
  Reading the newspaper; listening to radio and television news
  Reading school-produced publications

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[1] There might even be others of primary importance in your district, such as legislators, education associations and unions, local municipal and civic officials, citizen groups, PTAs, and advisory councils.

- *Taxpayers* (those not having children in the schools) get their information by:
  - Reading the newspaper and listening to radio and television news
  - Talking with neighbors, friends, and children they know
  - Talking with school employees
  - Listening to what's said by organizations they belong to or to which they pay attention
- *Pupils* get their information by:
  - Listening to their teachers and principal
  - Talking with other school employees: aides, secretaries, custodians
  - Talking with other pupils
  - Reading school newspapers and other school publications and notices
  - Attending school assemblies and programs
  - Reading the newspaper and listening to radio and television news
- *Staff members* get their information by:
  - Reading notices, reports, and bulletins at work
  - Attending schoolwide and department staff meetings and briefings
  - Talking with other staff members
  - Reading school and school district publications
  - Reading the newspaper and listening to radio and television news

Three things become apparent here. One is that for many of the target individuals, the news media play a sort of background role, one of reinforcing or contradicting their primary sources of information. A second is that much of this highly important communication takes place at the local school or under its auspices. And third, some persons who have been little noticed are probably very influential communicators: secretaries, aides, and custodians, to name only three.

Effective Communication: Take Care of the Home Front First

Twenty years of work in school public relations have led Michigan's Ned S. Hubbell to a fundamental conclusion: "Effective communications begin, center, and are reinforced within the organization. If you haven't made sure your employees are well informed, Group A will be saying one thing to the outside world, and Group B will be saying another."

Hubbell thinks school employees should be considered a major informational arm of the school system. A conductor of public school polls, Hubbell found that the views of most school employees—whether teachers or not—are seriously regarded by the community on what takes place at their school.

"Other people do ask them about such things as test results," he said, "and woe to the school district where all an employee knows is what he's reading in the newspaper." Hubbell noted a certain pride by employees about their schools and frustration in some who do not feel well enough informed.

Naturally enough, he sees the principal as the key communicator at the building level. Step 1 in Hubbell's plan calls for the superintendent to convene work sessions to help each principal interpret his or her own school's scores. Thus armed, principals move on to step 2, conducting family meetings at their own schools.

Everyone should be asked to the meeting: vice-principal, counselor, teacher, aide, secretary, custodian, and part-timers too. Test results are explained and analyzed, future steps are discussed, and questions are answered. Other, more specialized, meetings can be held later, but the family meeting helps all concerned learn enough to talk intelligently to nonschool people.

Hubbell takes pains to argue that everyone on the staff must be involved. "The secretary is the first one to whom parents speak when they call a school to find out about those reading scores that appeared in the morning newspaper," he notes. And others on the staff, whether full-time or part-time, are believed by the public to have inside knowledge of the school.

From Information to Action

Now we can put together our information about *how to* (techniques and middlemen) and *who to* (target individuals) and list all the different means of communication that should be considered except for the news media, discussed in Chapter VII. For all of our target audiences, a common thread of information about test results exists that needs to be communicated. The need is genuine even though persons in different roles want different kinds of information. The emphasis and degree of detail may vary, but the basic information to all should include the following points:

- *What were the results?* Some persons may just want to know whether the scores are high, medium, or low and whether the scores are improving. Others are interested in specific numbers, exact comparisons, or particular schools or levels.
- *How do you feel about them?* Is the district satisfied? Is the district concerned? Do you see the results as the outcome of considerable, well-spent effort? Or are the results a signal to get such effort started now?
- *What are the reasons for the results?* How do you account for the level of results achieved? Do you have any other figures or results that confirm the test results or point out different trends?
- *What will be done about the results (or with them)?* A study of newly found weaknesses? New programs, new emphases? Further analysis of the detailed figures?
- *How do the results affect you?* Different persons have different concerns: parents–a good education for their children; taxpayers–value and efficiency for their tax dollars; pupils–a sense of achievement or failure or potential changes in their courses of study; staff members–job security, reputation, potential change in their methods.

These five basic information points may look familiar. You may recall them because in a slightly different format, they provide the basis for your report to your board of education and for your information to the media that were discussed in chapters VI and VII.

Communications Techniques: A Checklist

Here, then, is a listing of ways to reach the four target audiences with your information. Please note that as the audience becomes more removed from the school itself, it relies more heavily on informal means of obtaining information (and less on receiving direct messages from you). By the time we reach the nonparent taxpayer, we find that virtually all of their information comes from secondary sources such as reading the newspaper or talking to parents. The lesson to be learned here is simply that good primary communication (to the media, staff, and students) pays dividends both now and later.

- *Communicating with staff:*

______ 1. Principals' briefings. Conduct detailed district-level briefings for principals, handing out all relevant written material, charts, figures, and tables that they will need. Be sure that they know the district's position and any steps in the offing.

______ 2. School-level "family meeting." The principal calls together all staff members (everyone!) to review the results–perhaps for more than one session so that everyone is included. Since teachers will meet later for detailed analysis, the principal may not need to proceed further than a thorough summary for the full staff. Family meetings should, of course, be conducted on school time.

______ 3. Schoolwide bulletin. An information bulletin for posting and use throughout the school will serve as a handy reference for both staff and students. It also will serve to refresh memories of the information covered at the family meeting.

______ 4. Districtwide bulletin. A districtwide bulletin can be produced through the use of either (a) the regular district staff newsletter; or (b) a special testing information bulletin for use around the district. Perhaps material prepared for the media will be serviceable for this purpose. Both the results and necessary corrective action can vary considerably between the district level and school level.

______ 5. Telephone readiness. Plan ahead for telephone inquiries. At each school and at the district office, someone should be designated to handle all telephone inquiries on test scores. The telephone operator needs to know who that person is.

- *Communicating with pupils:*

_____ 6. Review by teachers. The teacher, of course, is the pupil's primary source of official information about the school. Teachers should conduct reviews of test results and their meaning during class time. Since each pupil then becomes a secondary communicator, teachers should be sure that pupils have the important facts in mind, whether or not they remember exact numerical results. What they tell their parents will likely have more influence than what you write in your parent newsletter.

_____ 7. Article in student newspaper. An article can be useful at the intermediate and high school level. One should remember, though, that technical circumstances often impose a one- to two-week delay in getting information into a student newspaper.

_____ 8. Briefing for student leaders. On many campuses the views of student opinion leaders carry as much weight as those of the faculty. Student leaders should be told the full story.

_____ 9. Assemblies and pupil meetings. Time can be set aside at regular pupil assemblies for an overall review of results. This practice probably works better as reinforcement of teachers' reviews than as a source of original information.

- *Communicating with parents:*

_____ 10. A send-home note. In the early grades the teacher or principal can prepare short announcements for the day results are released, briefly summarizing the results and telling parents how they can get more information. Distributed in the afternoon to pupils, the announcements will reach the home on the same day. Columbus, Ohio, schools insert in report cards an information sheet about testing, accompanied by an invitation to call the principal for more information.

_____ 11. School newsletter. A complete review of results in newsletter or bulletin form should be planned to reach the home at nearly the same time as the release of results to the public. Use can be made of the newsletter published by the school or the district office. Samples of newsletters can be found in this chapter's resource material.

_____ 12. Parent-teacher conferences. Teachers should be prepared either to respond well to questions about test scores or, if desired, to bring up the subject themselves.

_____ 13. PTA briefing. Officers of local PTA councils and school advisory councils are consulted by many in the community for authoritative views on school matters. They need to be briefed—both at the district and school levels—before general public release of scores. After the release it may be useful to call special meetings of these parent groups to examine the results.

_____ 14. General parent meeting. Some schools hold monthly evening meetings for all parents. Whether such meetings are held in your district or not, it may be appropriate to call such a meeting to review test results.

- *Communicating with taxpayers:*

_____ 15. Newsletter. Most communication with nonparent taxpayers will be through indirect means. Some districts, however, mail a newsletter to all households in the community whether or not they have school-age children. Included is an explanation that all local residents have a financial and social stake in the schools. Such a newsletter, of course, should contain up-to-date information on test results.

Other Good Ideas

Many good ideas for specialized communication are in use throughout the state. They include:

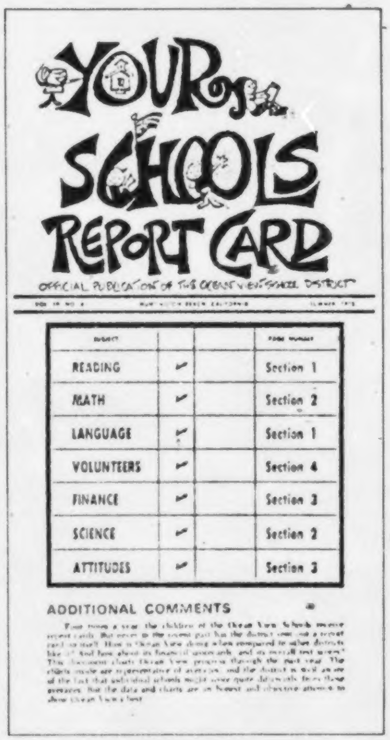
- *Centinela Valley Union High School District:* Superintendent Thomas D. Barkelew held work sessions for mathematics department chairpersons in the district's high schools. The chairpersons carefully analyzed mathematics test results, compared subskill scores with the schools' mathematics curriculum, adding and deleting subject material as appropriate. Now district tests are being developed to improve computational skills.
- *San Marino Unified School District:* Pupil Personnel Services Director Kenneth W. Ogden believes that districts must explain testing and its implications for pupils. "We are doing everything we can to encourage students to take testing seriously. A strong emphasis is placed on performance. We explain matrix sampling and point out that each test score is part of a composite score, and each is a reflection of the programs offered at their school."
- *San Ramon Valley Unified School District:* Curriculum Program Coordinator Martin Tucker holds workshops on testing for PTA groups in his district. He takes care to explain the meaning of professional testing jargon and lets PTA members take a sample test.
- *Claremont Unified School District:* Research and Information Officer Jean Hazelton uses a question-and-answer format in the district's newsletter for parents, *Family Gram,* to help parents thoroughly understand test results and their meaning.
- *San Juan Unified School District:* Phillip Oakes, Director of Research and Evaluation, builds his district testing program around the California Assessment Program. In this way he avoids duplication of testing at a particular grade level, saving both money and teaching time. When the results arrive, he meets with the cadre of reading consultants as well as with the principals (divided into four smaller groups to enhance communication) and department chairpersons of the high schools. Oakes feels it is important to emphasize to these groups that the results are theirs, not his, and that he is there to communicate the results and to be of service to them in helping them to understand the results.

Resource Material for Chapter VIII

Sample School District Newsletters

Samples of the ways in which some school districts report student test scores in their newsletters to staff and parents are presented here and on the following pages.

1 The Ocean View Elementary School District (in Huntington Beach) uses artwork excellently in its "report card" to explain to parents how pupils did in each area of instruction. The publication also reports comparisons in the district's financial level and community attitudes towards the schools. The complete publication is not shown here.

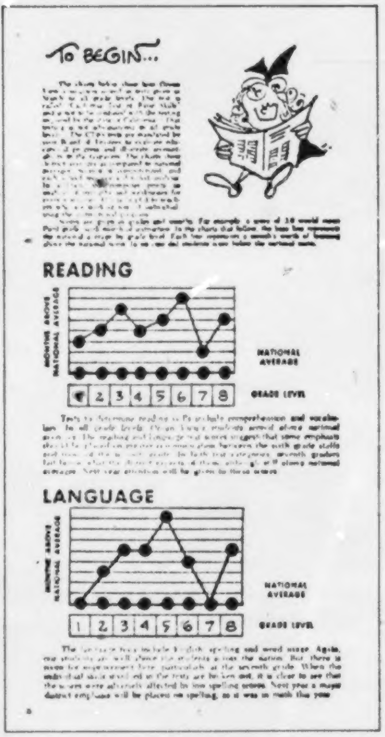


YOUR SCHOOLS REPORT CARD

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE OCEAN VIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT

[illegible]			[illegible]
READING	✓		Section 1
MATH	✓		Section 2
LANGUAGE	✓		Section 1
VOLUNTEERS	✓		Section 4
FINANCE	✓		Section 3
SCIENCE	✓		Section 2
ATTITUDES	✓		Section 3

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS



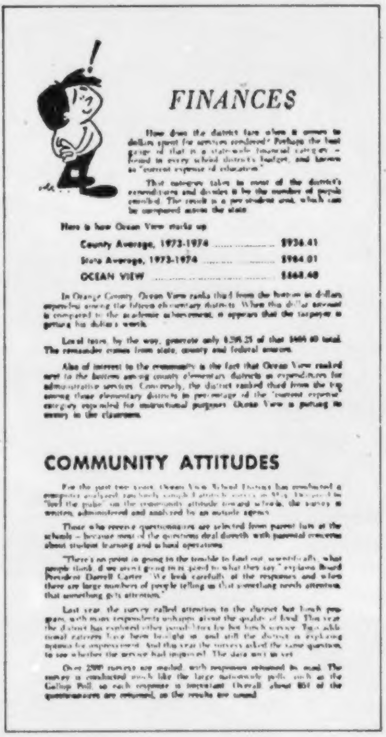
TO BEGIN...

READING

MONTHS ABOVE NATIONAL AVERAGE
NATIONAL AVERAGE
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
GRADE LEVEL

LANGUAGE

MONTHS ABOVE NATIONAL AVERAGE
NATIONAL AVERAGE
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
GRADE LEVEL



FINANCES

Here is how Ocean View stacks up

County Average, 1973-1974 .... $936.41
State Average, 1973-1974 .... $984.01
OCEAN VIEW $868.40

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

2 This community newsletter, published by the Placentia Unified School District, describes what the different schools are doing to improve reading and reports the district's overall test scores.

First 'R' stressed in schools

"American children do read and the whole they read rather well," observes a world renouned reading expert. And judging from the latest test scores, children in Placentia read better than most other American children.

Last year Placentia second graders scored higher than 78% of their peers throughout the state, while third graders ranked in the 73rd percentile and sixth graders in the 78th percentile. High school seniors in the district far exceeded the expected score to rank in the 93rd percentile.

Even with the relatively high scores in reading, the district is continuing to stress reading skills, and the board of education has placed reading at the top of the list of instructional priorities in budget and program considerations.

This philosophy is reflected in the addition this year of two elementary reading specialists, Peggy Hammer and Geraldine Thornton, and in the media centers which will be operating at all 14 elementary schools by next September.

"The labs provide a variety of materials to help children learn to read, both by working alone and with teachers," explained Dr Barbara Peterson, assistant superintendent of instructional services.

At Van Buren Elementary School, third through sixth graders spend a half hour a day working in their new reading skills center with materials selected for each individual's needs.

"Every child in the third through sixth grades has taken advantage of the program, and the progress of the students has far exceeded our expectations," according to Principal Stan Graham.

"Even with all the emphasis placed in the lower grades, we know all children are not expert readers, and special programs in the junior and senior high are designed to help them," Peterson said.

At Kraemer Junior High students from throughout the district who are not reading at their potential levels may work with a reading specialist in the lab for an hour after school twice a week.

"This hour in the lab is a treat for students," noted Debbie Mercier, the teacher. "At this age, motivation is one of the chief factors in getting young people to read, and the interesting materials and machines make learning fun."

A new reading program at Bernardo Yorba Junior High aims at motivating "already good" readers "to instill an appreciation of reading as a pleasant experience."

Approximately two-thirds of the students may choose "electives" for nine-week periods, in which they concentrate their reading efforts in such areas as science fiction, drama, poetry or short stories.

New at El Camino Real High School is the Learning 100 reading program which also uses audio and visual media to help students build vocabulary and comprehension and perceptual skills at their own pace. Because it is designed for adults, the material easily fits into the school's program for vocational education.

At Valencia High School students may sign up for sessions in the reading lab where they work individually and in small groups.

This month the entire Valencia student body is participating in a 20-day phonics review in which every teacher spends about five minutes in each class working with words and sounds.

"Every school in the district has reading as its number one priority," Dr Peterson said. "Our goal is to provide every child with necessary reading skills which he can use throughout life."

Bus box bulges with lost booty

A treasure trove of lost sweaters, coats and lunch boxes has been amassed in the district bus barn during the year, and supervisor of transportation Ed Mier would like to get rid of it.

The district buses seem to be a favorite place for children to lose things. When the buses return to the barn, drivers collect the goods and add them to the lost-and-found box.

Parents who find items missing from their children's belongings are urged to come to the district headquarters at 1301 E. Orangethorpe Ave. to search the lost-and-found box.

Clothing and other usable items which are not reclaimed by the end of the school year will be sent to Tijuana, Mex., for distribution to the needy.

AFTER-HOURS LEARNING - Ron Hall, seventh grader at Yorba Junior High, and Doug Stinson, Kraemer seventh grader, take advantage of special equipment in reading lab open after school at Kraemer.

VAN BUREN LAB - Teacher aide Toni Liebherr helps fourth grader Viviana Cornelison find appropriate materials to develop reading skills.

May 27 election set for building bonds

A bond election has been called May 27 in a second effort to provide the needed $20 million bond authorization to keep the district in the State School Building Program for the next five years.

A similar measure was narrowly defeated March 4 when the vote fell 1.4 per cent short of reaching the 66.7 per cent needed to pass.

"Nothing has changed since the day before the election," noted trustee John Balducci. "We need the bonds as badly now as we did then."

District officials conservatively estimate an increase of 4,500 students over the next five years. Past figures show growth averaging 1,066 students a year since 1963.

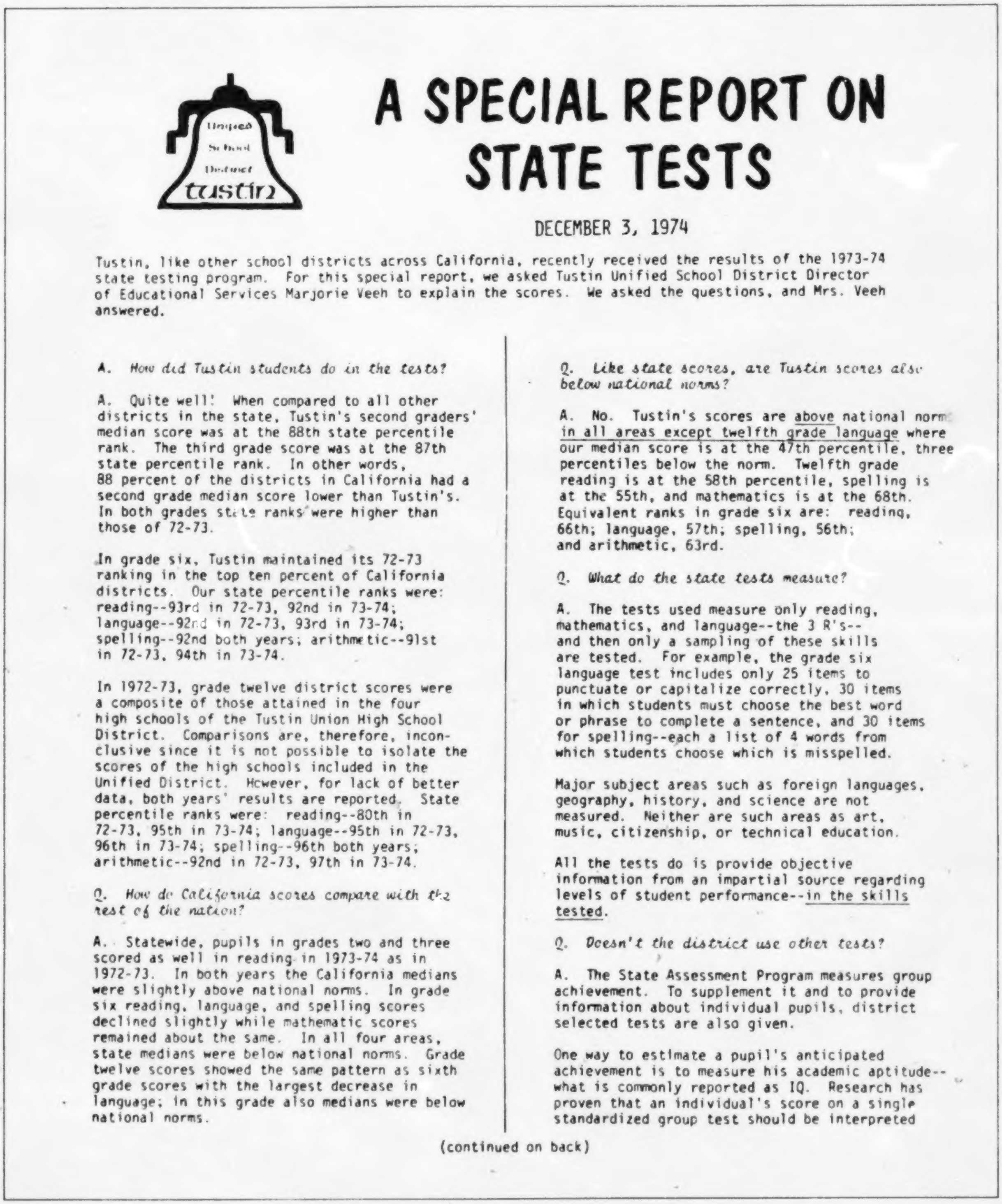
"We're beginning to see development opening up with the lowering of interest rates," said Supt. John Tynes, pointing out that tract maps already have been filed which would add about 4,000 students to the school system.

"We owe it to our taxpayers to let them know that taxes will be raised if we have to build schools outside the state program," he added.

Under the state program, the local building tax rate is held to an average of 80¢/$100 assessed valuation, the rate local patrons have been paying since 1962. The district is obligated to pay the 80-cent rate through 1988. The additional $20 million authorization would continue it through 1993.

Since the last bond authorization in 1969, the school district has received almost $6.8 million in low-interest loans from the state - almost a third of the construction costs for four elementary schools, Yorba Junior High, El Camino and Esperanza high schools and several school additions.

3 A question-and-answer format helps the Tustin Unified School District report test results in its newsletter. The front page is shown below, and the reverse side is shown on the next page.



Unified School District tustin

A SPECIAL REPORT ON STATE TESTS

DECEMBER 3, 1974

Tustin, like other school districts across California, recently received the results of the 1973-74 state testing program. For this special report, we asked Tustin Unified School District Director of Educational Services Marjorie Veeh to explain the scores. We asked the questions, and Mrs. Veeh answered.

A. *How did Tustin students do in the tests?*

A. Quite well! When compared to all other districts in the state, Tustin's second graders' median score was at the 88th state percentile rank. The third grade score was at the 87th state percentile rank. In other words, 88 percent of the districts in California had a second grade median score lower than Tustin's. In both grades state ranks were higher than those of 72-73.

In grade six, Tustin maintained its 72-73 ranking in the top ten percent of California districts. Our state percentile ranks were: reading--93rd in 72-73, 92nd in 73-74; language--92nd in 72-73, 93rd in 73-74; spelling--92nd both years; arithmetic--91st in 72-73, 94th in 73-74.

In 1972-73, grade twelve district scores were a composite of those attained in the four high schools of the Tustin Union High School District. Comparisons are, therefore, inconclusive since it is not possible to isolate the scores of the high schools included in the Unified District. However, for lack of better data, both years' results are reported. State percentile ranks were: reading--80th in 72-73, 95th in 73-74; language--95th in 72-73, 96th in 73-74; spelling--96th both years; arithmetic--92nd in 72-73, 97th in 73-74.

Q. *How do California scores compare with the rest of the nation?*

A. Statewide, pupils in grades two and three scored as well in reading in 1973-74 as in 1972-73. In both years the California medians were slightly above national norms. In grade six reading, language, and spelling scores declined slightly while mathematic scores remained about the same. In all four areas, state medians were below national norms. Grade twelve scores showed the same pattern as sixth grade scores with the largest decrease in language; in this grade also medians were below national norms.

Q. *Like state scores, are Tustin scores also below national norms?*

A. No. Tustin's scores are above national norms in all areas except twelfth grade language where our median score is at the 47th percentile, three percentiles below the norm. Twelfth grade reading is at the 58th percentile, spelling is at the 55th, and mathematics is at the 68th. Equivalent ranks in grade six are: reading, 66th; language, 57th; spelling, 56th; and arithmetic, 63rd.

Q. *What do the state tests measure?*

A. The tests used measure only reading, mathematics, and language--the 3 R's--and then only a sampling of these skills are tested. For example, the grade six language test includes only 25 items to punctuate or capitalize correctly, 30 items in which students must choose the best word or phrase to complete a sentence, and 30 items for spelling--each a list of 4 words from which students choose which is misspelled.

Major subject areas such as foreign languages, geography, history, and science are not measured. Neither are such areas as art, music, citizenship, or technical education.

All the tests do is provide objective information from an impartial source regarding levels of student performance--in the skills tested.

Q. *Doesn't the district use other tests?*

A. The State Assessment Program measures group achievement. To supplement it and to provide information about individual pupils, district selected tests are also given.

One way to estimate a pupil's anticipated achievement is to measure his academic aptitude--what is commonly reported as IQ. Research has proven that an individual's score on a single standardized group test should be interpreted

(continued on back)

more on tests

with caution; on another day or in another situation it might have been ten points higher or lower. Therefore, Tustin administered the California Test of Mental Maturity at grades one, three, six, and eight in 73-74 and again this year. With several scores available on an individual, a range of aptitude can be more accurately determined.

Individual pupil achievement in the same subject areas tested by the state is also measured. The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, given at grades three, six, and eight, measures against national norms a pupil's performance in reading, language, and arithmetic. In grade nine, the Sequential Test of Educational Progress assesses the same areas. Other tests, both standardized and teacher-prepared, are used as indicated to measure pupil progress in all areas of curriculum.

Q. *What is different in this year's tests?*

A. The California statewide testing program for public schools has undergone major changes since 1961 when intelligence and achievement testing of all students was first required. Legislation in 1972 deleted the requirement for intelligence testing and shifted the focus from individual to group assessment. It also provided for the development of tests specifically designed for schools in California while retaining the requirement that results could be compared with national norms. No change was made in grade levels or subject areas to be tested, i.e., reading in the primary grades and reading, language, spelling, and mathematics in grades six and twelve.

The new testing program was implemented in the primary grades in 1973-74. In grade one, entry level skills which are good indicators of school readiness and therefore good predictors of reading achievement were measured. The skills measured were those related to learning and memory, attention, visual perception, and auditory comprehension. Each child took the same test of 35 items.

In grades two and three achievement levels in word identification skills, vocabulary, comprehension, and alphabetizing were measured. Both grades took the same test so that growth could be more easily observed. For the first time in the state testing program, the multiple matrix sampling method was used. Ideally, a test for statewide assessment should contain many more items than one intended for individual pupil assessment. The California reading test developed for grades two and three contained 212 items, more than four times as many as the commercial test used in prior years. To require each child to take the entire test would be unrealistic. Accurate group assessment, however, can be made with only a little information from each pupil. Consequently, the 212 items were divided into 10 tests of 32 items each. Each test has an equal number of "hard" and "easy" items and covers the major reading objectives. Thus much more information can be derived at great savings in cost and testing time. Beginning this school year matrix sampling will be used in testing grades six and twelve, as well as grades two and three.

Q. *How do we feel about the results?*

A. Pleased, but not complacent! It is gratifying, it is true, to read in the local newspapers that Tustin's twelfth graders ranked highest in the county. However, the highest point is usually the most precarious of perches; it is far easier to go down than to go higher. And a very small difference in median raw score can result in a large difference in state percentile rank. For example, consider twelfth grade readers: Tustin's median raw score of 24.3 placed us at the 95th state percentile rank; just two points fewer would have placed us at the 83rd percentile.

Of much more importance than "ranks" or "scores" are the implications for program improvement indicated by the results. At this time, we have questions but few answers. An obvious question is: why are language scores relatively lower than those for other areas tested? In-depth studies to find the answer are already underway at two of our secondary schools. At every school principals and staff are analyzing the test results for possible restructuring of educational programs and practices. We are glad our students scored well, but perhaps we can do better. Anyway, we will try.